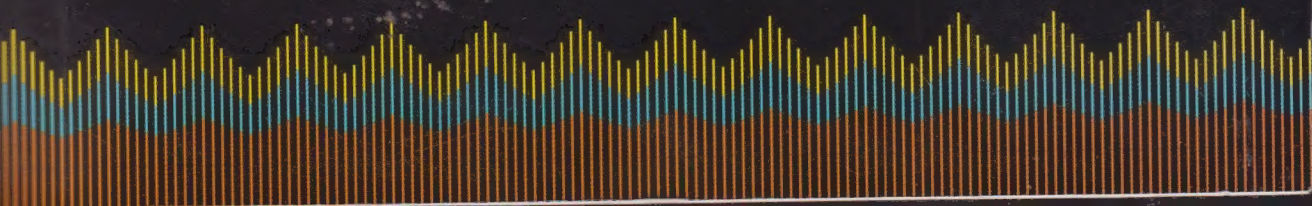


SIKHS AND SIKHISM



BHAI SAHIB SIRDAR KAPUR SINGH
NATIONAL PROFESSOR OF SIKHISM

DHARAM PARCHAR COMMITTEE
S.G.P.C. SRI AMRITSAR



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Written by :

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DHARAM PARCHAR COMMITTEE
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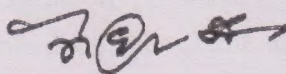
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FOREWORD

Late Sirdar Kapur Singh was honored with the designation of 'National Professor of Sikhism' by Sri Akal Takht Sahib in 1973 for his sacrifices and contributions towards Sikh religion, philosophy and politics. His writings contain the tenets of Sikh Gurus and in comparison with other Oriental and Occidental philosophies of the world. It is essential to keep his writings available to those who want to read and preserve them. It is our humble effort to print and publish his 9 writings for our esteemed readers in a book form.



(Gobind Singh Longowal)

President,
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee,
Sri Amritsar.

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A NOTE ON THE JAP(U)

The average modern man, not well-versed in the ancient idiom and *genre* of verbal traditions of India, experiences much difficulty in following the meanings, nuances and significance of the texts, such as the *Jap(u)* of Guru Nanak, for the *Jap(u)* assumes such a knowledge on the part of those to whom it is addressed. Therefore, the following lines.

The Vedas admittedly contain the most ancient philosophical and religious lore of mankind, and it is the corner-stone of all religious and metaphysical thought in India, during the last three or four millennia. Gautama, the Buddha, while preaching his precepts, twenty-five hundred years ago, said, as the *Dhammapada* records : *esso dhammam sanaatanam*, 'what I preach is the ancient truth.' The ancient religious lore of India is, collectively called, the Veda and, therefore, very ancient, indeed. The ontological status of the Veda, according to the *Mimaamsaa* which is a *vedaanga*, the limb of the Veda, is that it is unman-made, *apaurasheya*, and eternal, *anaadi*. What does this claim mean? The *Nyaayasutras* of Gautama, the rishi, another *vedaanga*, recognises four means of valid knowledge: *pratyakhsa*, senseperception, *anumaan*, inference, *upmaan*, analogy and *shabd*, testimony. *Pratyaksha* furnishes the material with which the Physical Sciences deal, while *anumaan* and *upmaan* do not independently furnish facts. They can only ruminate and analyse the facts furnished by the *pratyaksha* mode of proof. The material of the *Shabd* is the regions which are inaccessible to the normal human sense-perception, it being taken for granted that such regions exist, for they are there. A person who denies the existence of such regions is a *naastika*, 'who denies' and with him there is no further argument. He is the *Manmukh*.¹, 'A stone and lifeless stuff, a sorry and blank span of life.' The Veda, technically, is the corpus of the *shabd*, containing, in verbal sounds, the facts, pertaining to regions beyond the range of human sense-perception,

aided or unaided, 'Mysticism', 'numenon', vaguely signify, in the west the kind of knowledge which is the subject of *shabd*.

in India, the Veda, the repository of the *shabd*, has been identified with textual records, known as the *Rig-veda*, *Sam-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Atharva-veda*. Certain Upanishads are also commonly deemed, a part of this Veda, and this Veda has six limbs, the *Vedaangas*, the knowledge of which is necessary for understanding this Veda. These limbs are, Prosody, Pronunciation, Grammar, Etymology, Astronomy-Astrology and the *Kalpa*, the Ceremonial. The ancient Sanskrit treatises on these six sciences are the *vedaangas*. The facts given in the Veda were not perceived, deduced, or formulated through reason, but were revealed to men possessing high extra-sensitivity, the *rishis*, and the Veda is, therefore, *shruti*, revelation in contradistinction to *smriti*, —'that which is remembered', the knowledge derived through sense-perception and ratiocination. This is the foundation of the processes of the religious and meta-physical thought in India.

Gautama, the Buddha, repudiated the claim and validity of the Veda in this particular sense, and he also denied, by implication, the validity, of the *shabd*, non-human verbal sound, as a true source of knowledge. *Buddhi*, the enlightened, steadfast, dispassionate reason, was the source of the truths that Gautama, the Buddha, preached. As is recorded in the *Mahaaparinibbaanasuttam* of the Pali *Deeghanikaaya*, when Subhadra, a Brahmin-philosopher met the Buddha at the banks of the river *Hrinyayvati*, as the Buddha was about to pass away, in answer to the question as to whether there were any other truths beyond the lore contained in the Vedic texts and the Shastras, the Philosophical Systems supposedly derived from the texts of this Veda, the Buddha replied, "This is not the time for such discussions. To true wisdom, there is only one way, the path laid down by me...O, Subhadra, I do not speak to you of things I have not experienced. Since I was twenty-nine years old, till now, I have striven after pure and perfect wisdom..." It is for this reason that Gautama, the Buddha, is described as a *naastika* in the Hindu tradition, the one not only misguided but a deliberately false guide for confounding men and gods, both.²

2. *Namo buddhaaya suddhaaya daitya daanava mohine.*

—*Vaalmeekee Raamaayana*, II. 109. 34.

The disappearance of Buddhism from the land of its birth, about fifteen hundred years ago, is coeval with the reassertion of the doctrine of *shabd* and the identification of the *shabd* with the *corpus* of the texts of the ancient Sanskrit literature, known as the *Rig-veda*, *Sam-veda*, *Upanishads*, etc. In this Veda are also included, aphorisms called, the *brahma-sutras* of Baadraayana, the *rishi*. All the mighty currents of the Hindu religious developments that have taken place during the last fifteen hundred years or so, originate from interpretations for commentaries on these *brahma-sutras* by all figures such as Shankra, Ramanuja, and Madhva, the three great *achaaryas*, the founders of the philosophical systems known as *advaita*, monism, *visishta-advaita*, qualified monism and *dvaita*, dualism, the philosophic systems, from which the Vedantist, Vaishnava and Bhakti movements have flowed, throwing up such mighty figures as Chaitanya, Tukaram, Gyaneswar, Tulsi, Kabir, Vivekanand and Ramatirth. It may truly be asserted that all these movements and the whole of this religious thoughtpyramid and activity proceeds from and is based on logic and grammar, *bhaashyas*, expounded on the *brahma-sutras*.

After twenty five hundred years, after the Buddha, who was Siddhartha Gautama, Guru Nanak is a milestone in the spiritual life of India, comparable in principle, to the phenomena of the revelations of the Vedic texts and the system of psychological discipline and intellectual ratiocination of Gautama, the Buddha. Guru Nanak proclaims the validity of the doctrine of the *shabd* in a special sense and claims that the *shabd*-testimony which he prefers is independent, in its genesis and validity, of the ancient scriptural texts called the Veda, but beyond that he does not explicitly go. He does not repudiate the truths enshrined in these scriptural texts. This point must always be borne in mind when understanding Guru Nanak, for a non-appreciation of this point has already resulted in endless confusion and misunderstandings. Unlike Gautama, the Buddha, Guru Nanak does not repudiate the validity of the *shabd*-testimony. Like Gautama, the Buddha, he denies that the springs of truth have dried up for ever to mankind and that the mortals may do no more than interpret reinterpret, exegetise with the aid of Logic and Grammar, the truths concealed and congealed, stratified and implicit in the ancient scriptural texts. With regard to the genesis of the *shabd*-

testimony, the Guru asserts that the human beings are capable, each one of them, to experience the truths of which he speaks, provided he submits himself to a rigorous psychosomatic and spiritual discipline and provided certain transcendental conditions called, the powers of Grace are favourable to him. The last hymn of the *Jap(u)* which is numbered as hymn 38, is a clear enunciation of this modified doctrine of *shabd*. This modified doctrine of *shabd* is of tremendous significance and power for the religious thought of India and indeed, for the full unfoldment of the religious dimension of man. It preserves the transcendental character of Truth, but adds to it the concept of a growing knowledge of this truth, within the ken of human minds. Its primary interest is centered around the problem of the quality of living and the transformation and evolution of the human mind and experience, as distinct from the standard of living, which the modern politics-oriented man assumes is the whole of Truth. This doctrine of Guru Nanak is of such a large philosophic nature it would be difficult to conceive of any historical or scientific discovery which would greatly affect it. The essential teaching of Guru Nanak the essence of Sikhism, therefore, has nothing to fear from the two basic and relentless activities of the modern Western mind, the 'higher criticism', and the 'scientific investigation.' The higher criticism consists of examination of the previous ideas and their alleged authorities, and the scientific investigation examines all things dispassionately, objectively, assuming nothing and testing everything. Guru Nanak bases his testament on no previous authority and concedes the possibility of the truths that he reveals, being tested by human mind, provided certain experimental conditions are present and provided.

Modern mind assumes that what is referred to as 'higher truth' of religious experience is either hallucination or result of 'wishful thinking', whatever the term, 'wish' and 'thinking' might connote here. Carl Jung, for instance, informs us that if the mind asserts the existence of a 'Universal Mind', the mind that encompasses and informs all individuated minds—*tis dai chaanan(i) sabh mahi chaanan(u) hoi*.³ (Guru Granth, Dhanaasaree-I), it is because 'there is no evidence whatever for the ability of the human mind to pull itself up by its own

3. ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥

— (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ੧ (੩), ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩)

boot-strings, i.e. to establish anything transcendental.' (*Introduction to the Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, ed. Dr. Evantz Wentz, Oxford. 1954, pp. 29-32). Bluntly put, the idea is that the so called, 'higher truth' is mere speculation because no one can have direct experience of it. The reply of the *Jap(u)* is that here the point is missed. The issue is not one of proving propositions, as Kant has clearly shown that they cannot be proved, but of understanding them, which is a much wider faculty because it breaks down the separation of subject and object, to which faculty the *Jap(u)* refers, as the last rung of the process of knowing : *suniaa manniaa man(i) keetaa bhaau*.⁴ The position of the *Jap(u)* is not that 'higher truth' is apprehensible by everybody's mental horizon, but that it is apprehensible through requisite discipline and training, for the only fully convincing proof is to have such experience for oneself, *sine experientia nihil sufficienter scri potest*.⁵ It is to this that *Kenopanishad* (III. 3) points out, through the paradox : 'It is understood by those who do not understand its, meaning that experience and not argumentative demonstration establishes the 'higher truth', the *shabd* of the *Jap(u)*.

First, that the 'higher truth' is not mere fantasy or hallucination of philosophical speculation but a fact of experience, and second, that the 'higher truth' is experienceable by every human being provided he successfully undergoes and practices the requisite psychosomatic discipline, described in the stair-38 of the *Jap(u)* : *jat(u) paahaaraa dheeraj(u) suniaar(i)*⁶, are the quintessential propositions of the *Jap(u)*. That not mere 'authority' or 'dogma', but 'reason' and 'experience' are the proper 'stairs' by which man may ascend to the 'higher truth', is a fundamental of Buddhism, as is recorded in the Mahayan text, *Gyaanasaarasamuchya*, as the teaching of Gautama who became the Buddha: *taapaachcha chhedaachcha, nikashaachcha svarnamiya panditaah, pareekshya bhikshaa graahyam madvacho na tu gauravaat*,⁷ meaning, just as a sensible man

4. ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ॥ (ਜਪੁ (੨੧), ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ ੪)
(*shravan manan nidhyaasam, of Brihadaarnyakopanishad*)

5. Without experience nothing may sufficiently be known.

6. ਜਤੁ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ॥ (ਜਪੁ (੩੮), ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ ੮)

7. तापाच्च छेदाच्च निकषाच्च स्वर्गमि व पण्डिता। परीक्ष्य भिक्षा ग्राह्यं मद्रूपो न तु गौरवात्॥

(*ज्ञानसारसमुच्चय*)

first rubs against touchstone, heats and cuts through a piece of gold before accepting it as genuine. even so, an aspirant must experience the 'higher truth' for himself and not accept it merely on the authority of Gautama, the Buddha. The *Jap(u)*, while deprecating mere dogma, in the requisite psychosomatic discipline it recommends and retains the role of 'reason' under the control, and guidance of the revealed, guide-lines available to mankind : *aharan(i) mat(i) ved(u) hathiaar(u)*⁸ and with this the modern enlightened man can have no quarrel. since he now is aware that, thanks to Sigmund Freud, rationalisation, the counterfeit of reason, is a child of the emotional complex of the individual's character and not a clear and sovereign light of guidance in its own right. While Buddhism affords no indication of its awareness of this truth about human faculties, the *Jap(u)* takes explicit note of it by teaching that the 'higher truth' can be hammered out for the purpose of grasping by the human mind on 'the anvil of reason' with the tool of the revealed light only. It is this insight of the *Jap(u)* which is integrated into the Sikh congregational prayer : *Sikhaan daa man neevaan mat uchee, mat daa rakhaa aap Waaheguru*⁹ : "May our reason flow clear of emotional obfuscations under the constant guidance of God. Individual, unguided reason, uninformed with the light, that is, the Guru's teaching is self-stultifying. Did not Spinoza say, long before our prophets of the modern Depth-psychology that, "What Paul says about Peter tells us more about Paul than Peter?"

That the 'higher truth' may be experienced and reached, not through the normal experience of an average man but only through an intense psychosomatic discipline, has been accepted and proclaimed as the 'ancient truth', *sanaatana satya*, in our country, a precept that has now universally become known as, Yoga, in the west. Such a claim has neither been discussed nor raised in Western science and Philosophy. It was not contemplated by Greece, since classical times, though we can say neither one way or other about Orphism, Pythagorean teachings or the Eleusynian mysteries. It is rather unlikely, though, that there existed anything like the psychosomatic practices elaborated in India, to experience the 'higher truth.' There are no references or indications justifying such an assumption in the

8. ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ॥

(ਜਪੁ (੩੮), ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ ੮)

9. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਮਤ ਉੱਚੀ, ਮਤ ਦਾ ਰਖਾ ਆਪ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ।

(ਅਰਦਾਸ)

art and literature produced within the ambit of Greek civilization. In the West, fantasy, such as is sometimes said to have inspired, cosmogonical mysteries of our Puranas in part, have not dwelt on such a human endeavour that seeks to grasp the higher apex of reality through a regulated *saadhanaa*. From Plato onwards, only the negative reflection is there that it is not possible to accomplish a real transformation of human nature and the Judiac-Christian-Orthodox Islamic tradition that God and man are separated by an unbridgeable gulf is a logical corollary thereof. Freud who frankly admits (*Essays on Contemporary events*, 1946) his importance to influence the demoniac powers in modern civilisation, is only restating this basic attitude. The idea that man can be fundamentally transformed and uplifted, can become liberated from the conditioned Existence and then by reverting to the world, can bring his weight to bear against the demons, is utterly foreign to the basic assumptions and conceptions of the Western mind and the modern man, and for him, therefore, the assertions in the stair 38 of the *Jap(u)* are either Mumbo-jumbo or downright puzzling. For the modern man, which has the twentieth century European intellectual as its prototype, the *Jap(u)* opens up new and enchanting vistas of knowledge and states of consciousness such as are not only relevant to the human situation to-day but spell out the nature of the ultimate concern of man, as well as indicate outlines of likely solutions to tensions and frustrations that currently afflict the human society.

The *Jap(u)* has 38 hymns or *pauris* or stairs containing a systematic and thorough exposition of the teachings of Guru Nanak, though, it bears repetition, a good knowledge of cultural history and metaphysical developments of the Hindu and Sufi Muslim thought are presumed in those to whom it is addressed.

All the hymns of the *Jap(u)* are metrical, on the pattern of the *Rig-veda*, with a severity of expression and economy of words, making the stanzas, kin-brothers of ancient Sanskrit literary *genre*, *sutras*, a reason which has made the *Jap(u)* the most difficult part of the Sikh scripture to understand. The line which forms the metrical unit, consists of varying number of syllables and in each line the number of syllables is constant, though the metrical unit is not identical in all 'stairs'. The concluding lines of a hymn are often of a different syllabic length. The metres like

those of the classical Sanskrit have a quantitative rhythm in which long and short syllables alternate. The rhythm of the last four or five syllables is rigidly determined. In their structure, they come half-way between the metres of the *Zend Avesta*, where the principle is the number of syllables only and the classical Sanskrit in which the quantity of every single syllable in the line is fixed, except in the case of the *salok*, the epiloguic conclusion.

The opening lines of the *Jap(u)* constitute the *moolmantra*, the basic tenets of Sikhism, embodying the Guru's ideas about the nature of the ultimate Reality. The *salok(u)* at the end is the revelation of Nanak, the Second, Guru Angad, and forms a fitting epilogue to the *Jap(u)*, in the *Guru Granth*.



AN INCOMPARABLE PROPHET GURU AMAR DASS (1479-1574)

Guru Amar Dass, Nanak the Third, is referred to as 'an incomparable prophet' in the Sikh scripture¹, not in the sense of unparalleled qualitative superiority or imperial spiritual status, for, according to Sikh doctrines there is no social hierarchy in the world of the Spirit and no gradation of excellence or rank amongst God's prophets or men otherwise 'filled with God'. the Sikh scripture refers to all true prophets and men filled with the Holy Spirit, as 'co-equal and entitled to utmost reverence'². But there are differences of identity and in the aroma of the time-climate in which the prophets and the messengers of God manifest themselves and operate. It is in this sense that Guru Amar Dass is referred to as 'incomparable' in the *Guru Granth*. The epiphany of the spiritual effulgence of Guru Amar Dass occurred in the second half of the 16th Century when, in an obscure corner of India, he appeared in the religious firmament of the world as a quasar, quasi-star but has been commonly regarded as a mere asteroid. A 'quasar' is a distinct heavenly body distinguishable by its extraordinary radio-action, smaller than galaxies, yet emitting many million times of energy released by any ordinary star. A quasar is incredibly luminous though such steller objects are estimated to be about 5,300 million light-years away from us, while an asteroid or planetoid is just a junior member of our own solar system, just a little planet. Those who like to view Guru Nanak in his ten manifestations as *bhaktas* of Hindu vaishnavite tradition or '*sants*' in the sense of highly pious Hindus, confuse a quasar with an asteroid. Nor is Guru Nanak, in any of his Manifestations, to be judged merely by their historical impact on society or history, for, we must not reduce religion to social revolutionary Marxism. As the famous Christian theologian, Harnack has said:³

1. *Bhalle Amardas gunu tere teri upma tohi ban avai.*
2. *Nanak vechara kia kahai, sabh lok salahai ek sai, siru Nanak loka pav hai, balihari jao jete tere nav hai.*
3. *Adolf von Harnack, Die Mission, 1902.*

"He already wounds religion who primarily asks what it has achieved for culture and progress of mankind and wants, accordingly, to determine its value. The meaning of life unfolds always in the supra-worldly spheres."

"It is in the supra-world that true worth of man is adjudged", according to the Sikh Scripture,⁴ for, "here it is pitch dark night and there the shining light of the day"⁵, wherein aloft the meaning of life and death are clearly seen.

II

In this parameteral plane it is proposed to refer briefly to the following points and facets of Nanak, the third -, Guru Amar Dass, in this monograph :

1. A capsule-biography of Guru Amar Dass.
2. Ontological status of the Sikh Gurus in the Sikh dogmatics and the true place of Sikhism in the World of Religion.
3. Distinctive contributions of Guru Amar Dass to religious thought and ecclesiastical matters, such as, (a) his exegesis of the specific component, ananda, joy, bliss, of the Hindu comprehension of absolute Reality, *sat-cit-anand*, that is, truth-consciousness-bliss, (b) his new psycho-somatic understanding of 'food' with its social implications, (c) his deeper interpretation of the Hindu ideal of a 'virtuous wife', *sati*, (d) his estimation of the female-principle in woman in relation to her capacity and eligibility to religious experience in its fullness and participation in religious practices and ritual, her right to preach religion and her right to administer ecclesiastical and church affairs.
4. Finally, his ideas about 'revelation' and 'literature', and his peculiar literary craftsmanship.

III

Guru Amar Dass was born on May 5, 1479. His occupation as secular man was agriculture and petty trade. He married at the age of 24 and had two sons and two daughters. He was a staunch vaishnavite Hindu who annually went on pilgrimage to Haridwar to have a dip in the Ganga and he practised austerities and regularly performed religious rituals befitting a pious Hindu. It was rather late in

4. *Kac pakai othal pae.*

5. *Othe dinh ethai sabh rat.*

life that he came in contact with Nanak, the second, Guru Angad, and was eventually consecrated as Nanak, the Third, as Guru Amar Dass in the year 1552.

For 22 years of his remaining life he preached religion and organised Sikh religious affairs with unremitting zeal and unabating exertion and the obscure village of Goindwal, near Amritsar, became, elevated to the 'Acropolis of God' in popular estimation, as the Sikh Scripture records.⁶ In the Sikh World this village became adjudged as "the Axle around which Sikhism revolves and moves forward."⁷ Here Sikhs congregated from far and near and here princes and princesses, Muslims and Hindus, Emperor Akbar and the Raja of Haripur, Kangra came to pay homage to the Guru.

Here Guru Amar Dass established his open free kitchen that served food to visitors round the clock and the Guru made it obligatory for every visitor to him to have food in this Eating House (*langar*), before coming to his presence, and the Emperor and the prince, the rich and the poor, the high caste and the low caste, all complied with this requirement.

Here the Guru had excavated and constructed a splendacious and covered, domed and bricked, huge water-reservoir, the *Baoli*, that remains firm as rock after four centuries of wear and tear, in itself no mean engineering feat that compares favourably with many of our present day 'Five-Year Plans' achievements in durability and functional utility. It also is revered as a sacred place of pilgrimage for ritual bathing for those who understand the intimate initiatory relationship between water and religious quest.

It was here that the Guru provided a solid organisational base to the Sikh church by imparting to it the permanent character that parallels but does not enter into direct rivalry with the political state and which upholds and proclaims the primacy of moral obligations and spiritual necessities of man over the coercive and merely utilitarian power and goals of the political state. He set up twenty-two bishoprics, *manjis*, co-extensive in jurisdiction with the 22 administrative regions of the contemporary Mughal Indian empire, and women were ordained and included amongst these Sikh bishops, conferring on them the right and authority to preach and administer religion and ecclesiastical affairs.

Here God, in His discretion and pleasure, communicated with man, through the Word of the Guru, 'by filling the Guru's personality with His Presence', to make the basic distinction between 'revelation' and 'literature' by assigning the former the validity of true guidance for man in matters of his ultimate concern.

6. *Goindwal gobindpuri sam.*

7. *Goindwal Sikhi da dhura.*

8. *Gur vic ap smoe sabad vartaia.*

Here, the Word of the Guru, clearly distinguished the Sikh mysticism of Personality from the hitherto accepted, the Jainist and Buddhist mysticism of Infinity, the one that aims at denial to one's self so as to become the channel of Divine Love, the vehicle of God's will, and the other that aims at complete, utter and irrecoverable annihilation of personality, *mukti nirvana*.

Here the Guru deepened and spiritualised the fundamental social rituals and ceremonies of birth, death and marriage by extricating them from the control and strangle-hold of a hereditary and genetic priesthood of *brahmins* and by integrating them to the Sikh spiritual discipline for human enlightenment.

Here he issued the stern Ordinance forbidding monasticism and *renunciation* of the world for a man of religion, and thus emphasised the centrality of activism and worldaffirmation in Sikhism.

Here, at Goindwal, Guru Amar Dass, passed away on September 1, 1574 after appointing and anointing his successor and after admonishing Sikhs 'not to view death with sorrow and grief'⁹ but to know it as a stage and station in the continuing evolution and progress of human soul.

IV

There is one dogma and one scientific truth without accepting and understanding both of which, Sikhism cannot be properly appreciated. There are two approaches to understand and appreciate a religion, one valid and legitimate and the other invalid and arbitrary. The valid approach is that of auto-interpretation, that is, interpretation according to the basic postulates and doctrines of that religion itself, and the arbitrary and presumptuous approach is that of hetero-interpretation, that seeks to evaluate and judge a religion according to postulates and norms alien or hostile to it. This latter is the domain of polemics and confrontation and not of understanding and appreciation. Hetero-interpretation is, in the poetic imagery of the *Gitanjali* by Rabindranath Tagore, as if "a jeweller has come to the garden to test excellence of rose-flower by rubbing it against his touch-stone." In Sikhism, auto-interpretation of a religion alone is approved. The Sikh Scripture lays down that, "a sympathetic approach towards a religion is alone fruitful and satisfying, while an attitude of acrimony and fault-finding is frustrative and self-stultifying."¹⁰ The Sikh *Formularies* sternly declare "a fault-finding approach towards other religions as anathema."¹¹

9. *Mat main picche ko rovasi so main mul na bhaia.*

10. *Khoji upajai badi binasai.*

11. *Avar jagat panthan hain jete, kare ninda nahi kababun tete.*

The fundamental dogma of Sikhism and its epiphany is that all the historical Manifestations of Sikh Gurus, the Ten Nanaks, constitute one identical Personality in continuous movement through ten corporealities, as God of Sikhism is a God of revelation who, on His own initiative presses towards revealing Himself. This dogma is the starting point of Sikhism and is fundamental to its understanding and practice. A dogma is a body of teachings necessary for salvation, rejection of which constitutes adamantine impediment to spiritual progress. It is in this sense that Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak the Tenth, proclaims that without accepting and understanding this dogma, "a Sikh never achieves spiritual fulfilment."¹² Bhai Gurdas (1551-1639), an unimpeachable authority on Sikhism, clearly tells us that every historical manifestation of the Nanak is merely a change in corporeality without infringement of the identity of personality.¹³ Mohsin Fani, a Zoroastrian contemporary of Nanak, the Sixth (1595-1649) on the basis of correspondence with the Guru, specifically mentions the Sikh dogma as fundamental to Sikhism.¹⁴ The dogma is reiterated in numerous texts of the Guru Granth.¹⁵

V

The scientific fact about Sikhism is that it is neither a syncretism, an amalgam and intellectual extraction from other religions and creeds nor a sect of Hinduism or Islam as has been variously asserted from time to time by numerous authorities. It is an autonomous, independent religion, complete and whole, with its validity inhering in its own revelations and proclamations such as are repeatedly made in the Sikh Scripture, its pious literature and its historical movement. The newly developed Science of Religion and its critique categorises all higher world-religions into the Mystic religions and the Prophetic religions. The basis of Mystic religions is anonymous experiences of individuals, while the Prophetic religions arise out of a confrontation of an individual, the Prophet, with God in the relationship of 'I and Thou', in the phraseology made famous by Martin Buber (1878-1965). As an authority on the subject explains it.

*"What is important in mystical acts is that something happens. What is important in prophetic acts is that something is said."*¹⁶

12. *Bin jane sidhi hath na ai.*

13. *Arjan kaia palat ke murat Hargobind svari.*

14. *Dabistan-e-mazahib, (1645)*

15. *Ramdasi guru jag taran kau gur jot Arjan mahi dhari.*

16. *Abraham J. Herschel, "The Prophets," 1963.*

The religions taking their birth in the Middle East, such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam are 'prophetic' religions while those arising in India, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism are mystic or speculative religions. Sikhism is the only 'prophetic' religion that ever arose in India and the question of its sectarian or subordinate character and status in relation to any Indian religion, therefore, simply cannot arise in any scientific judgement. This position is repeatedly asserted in the sacred texts of the *Guru Granth* itself.

VI

Mysticism, in the sense of contact with an extra sensory Order of Reality, is the core of all higher religions. After the Second World War, there have been extensive and serious speculations on the modes and contents of mystical experience, in Europe that still overwhelms the East's Euro-centred mental horizons on account of its political strength and superiority of technological power. This activity has arisen out of two different and independent thrusts of, scientific enquiry and philosophic speculation, after both of these mighty movements of human mind reached a kind of *cul-de-sac*, a point beyond which no further travel for the human intellect seems possible. The shift of sciences into an altogether autonomous sphere after release from the shackles of theology, that of experimental experience and research, had the human intellect seems possible. The shift of sciences into an altogether autonomous sphere after release from the shackles of theology, that of experimental experience and research, had led to a world-outlook based on rational scientific concepts, in the 18th century. This is called the "first illumination" by the creative leading intellectuals. Now, during the last two decades or so, notable scientists of the 20th century, such as Albert Einstein, Max Born, Max Planck and Niels Bohr have admitted and declared the religious background of their concepts of life, of the Universe and the man. "My religion", says Albert Einstein, "consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds." Thrusts into cosmos undertaken through the modern development of astronautics, by the U. S. A. and U. S. S. R. have contributed to elimination of the geo-centric conception of the world which, until 1960's and early 1970's lay at the basis of naive religious thinking. These space programmes have also contributed to preparing the way for new religious feelings, for the world, and for the life by, recognition of the unique position of man and his religion in human concerns. This feeling is adumbrated in the holy *Koran* (51 : 57) wherein the ultimate purpose of creation is declared as worship of God, and this feeling is explicitly asserted in the concluding *sloku* of the *Japu* wherein our earth is spoken of as the locus of Drama and the play of Good and Evil implicating

ethical activity as the central concern of man. In philosophy, its classical tool, human reason, was first devalued by the English philosopher. David Hume (1711-1776) in his *Treatise of Human Nature* wherein he showed that the truths of reason are true merely by definition, like mathematics but that the truths of the world we live in are based on experience instead of logic. This gave birth to two directions to philosophical speculation, one pursued by Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean Paul Sartre who hold that the only knowledge worth having is knowledge that bears directly on the human experience, and the other direction taken up has flowered into Analytical Philosophy which limits the role of reason to logic and mathematics and thus restricts philosophy's concern with the meaning, structure and precision of language. The seminal figures of Analytical Philosophy are Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein who, the last named, used to describe his philosophy, when your today's speaker was his student at Cambridge during the thirties, as "the philosophy to end all philosophy." When pointed out that it was likely to create a serious unemployment problem for the philosophers, his reply was, "Why, there is the mystic experience." About this mystic experience Albert Einstein says that, "the most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical, It is the sower of all true science." Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung dealt the *coup-de-grace* to all rational truth-finding speculations by showing that human reason was a false coin, essentially a tool of human passions, a sycophant and a courtier and no more trustworthy. It is in this background that the recent poignant and intense interest in Mysticism and the date of mystical experiences throughout the ages, available for study, has arisen in the recent decades of the 20th century. Drug-culture of the modern younger generation, hippies, beatniks the flowerchildren, is a fascinating product and aberration of these trends in the domains of Science and Philosophy. This 'drug culture' has its roots in the scientific and philosophic stalemate in the Western psyche and arises out of a quest and yearning for new experiences and expanded consciousness. This is the 'second illumination' of man, after the sway of rationalism of the 18th and 19th centuries that urges him to interest himself in mysticism and beckons him to a return to religion.

VII

The new understanding of the age-old mystic experience of man, much data about which is available for serious study in the Hindu sacred texts of *upanishads* and *vedanta* and Buddhist texts of Mahayan of Indian and Far Eastern origin, along with the records left by and pertaining to the great medieval and modern Christian mystics as well as the prestigious Sufi tradition of Islam, reveals that mystical goals are of two categories, distinct and distinguishable, one of the Mystic religions and

the other of Prophetic religions. Reynold Nicholson while explaining the nature and goal of Islamic mysticism makes the point clear by saying that,

*"Unlike nirvana which is merely the cessation of individuality, the fana, passing away of the sufi from his phenomenal existence involves baqa, the continuance of his real existence and personality. He who dies to self lives in God, and fana, the consummation of his death, marks the attainment of baqa, or union with the divine life."*¹⁷

The goal of Sikh mysticism as revealed in the *Guru Granth* and the *Dasam Granth* of Guru Gobind Singh, is indubitably the goal of baqa of Sufi mysticism, not irrecoverable dissipation and merger of personality in the neutral Absolute Reality, the *brahma*, through *nirvana* and *mukti*, but the perpetuation of personality, through its phenomenal death and by its rise into unison with the Person of God, so that the liberated soul, the *brahmagyani* becomes a vehicle of God's Will in transcendent relationship as well as in the creative process of God. That is what is meant when the *Guru Granth* says that "a liberated soul is filled with zeal of cosmic welfare."¹⁸ That is what is meant when in the *Dasam Granth* Guru Gobind Singh says that though he had "achieved complete and full unison with God,"¹⁹ and yet the Divine Command sent him back to earth to carry out God's purpose of "propagating good and destroying evil."²⁰ This ultimate concern of man according to Sikhism, the goal of establishing permanent unison with the Transcendent Reality, the Person of God, *Akalpurkh*, clearly separates and distinguishes Sikhism, as a religion, apart from and independent of the Hindu and Buddhist spiritual tradition. The claim of Sikhism as an independent and autonomous, world-religion is no naive or empty boast of a presumptuous claim, and it is a demonstrably valid and scientific assertion. There are no songs of *nirvana* in the Sikh doctrine and no hungering for peace of nothingness, utter death, emptiness and immobile little rest or *shantih* here.

"Nor scattering of personality or cleavage of 'individuality', karvatra, to achieve submergence into the sum-total of eternal substances, Brahman, is the acceptable goal in Sikhism, nor unrealisable and ever unfulfilled human yearning for an utterly inaccessible God is the Sikh doctrine and Vision of religious quest;

17. *The Mystics of Islam, 1921.*

18. *Brahamgiani paraopkar omaha.*

19. *Dvai te ek rup hvai gaio.*

20. *Dharam calavan sant ubaran, dust sabhan mul uparan.*

*but an abiding unison of the nature of a love-duet between man and God, God the Creator of the mortal man and the immortal Brahman, atamattava, both, is the teaching of Sikhism."*²¹

VIII

From this concept of Sikh *summum bonum* follows the new definition and content that Guru Amar Dass imparted to the fundamental concept of Absolute Reality, conceived as *sat-cit-ananda* in Hindu spiritual tradition. True understanding and pursuit of this last component of Absolute Reality, *ananda*, has engaged Hindu mind throughout the ages conceiving of it as the seed-less and featureless trance where the mind, in its utter unflickering emptiness, is, somehow, aware of this unsullied and altogether un-related nothingness and, in another way, relating it to pure bodily well-being *pushitimarag*, or the mystic thrill of sex experience. Our modern sarvant, Aurobindo, in his, *Life of Divine* quotes *Taitreyaopanisad* with approval where it is said :

"Delight is existence, delight is the secret of creation, delight is the root of birth, is the cause of remaining in existence, delight is the end of birth and that in which creation ceases."

Modern British Philosopher F. H. Bradley (1846-1924) in his *Appearance and Reality*, asserts that, "the Perfect means the identity of idea and existence accompanied by pleasure."

Serious reflection, however, would show that these three components or characteristics of the Absolute Reality, no matter how intimately fused into one another to form a single whole, the last one of these components cannot conceivably exist without inhering in a 'person'. Though Being, *sat*, can be independent of Consciousness, *cit*, and can exist in its own right, and though *cit* may likewise exist without the surrogate of and direct alliance with *sat*, the Being, *ananda*, joy, bliss, simply cannot exist except as a deposit in the receptacle of consciousness which postulates a 'person'. Consciousness itself, the greatest mystery that man encounters, may be conscious of nothing else but itself but that leads to, what the philosophers call, 'infinite' regression', implicating that the consciousness that is conscious of itself, must, in some definite sense, be other than "itself" of which it is conscious. Thus one never can grasp the starting point

21. *Karvatu bhala na karvat teri, lag gale sun benati meri.
Haun vari mukh pher piare, karvat de mo ko kahe ko mare.*

— Guru Granth, Asa-Kabir.

of this regression, unless a 'person' is postulated as the safe-deposit receptacle of this consciousness. *Ananda*, in order to be conceived at all, must be known by that which is other than *ananda*, a 'person', or else it makes no sense. *Ananda* must be known by a 'person', though *sat* and *cit* do not suffer from this incurable prerequisite disability, for them to exist. It follows that, in the Mysticism of infinity, there just can not be *ananda*, while in the Mysticism of Personality, all the three components of the Absolute Reality achieve viability and validity. It was this point which Guru Amar Dass elucidated with remarkable lucidity in his Revelation, *Anandu Ramkai*, in the *Guru Granth* :

"There has been much speculation about what anandu is, but the Word of the Guru now makes the matter clear. The Anandu is to be ever with God, the gift of His Grace and mark of His love."

*"God, in His Mercy, destroys the impurities and limitations of the human ego and bestows upon him the true knowledge and everlasting existence. The man when freed from the gravitational pull of the world of corruption becomes weightless and purified with Truth, that is, the Word."*²²

This is the *anandu* taught by Sikhism.

IX

The ancient and prestigious *chhandogyaopanisad* tells us that, "human mind is made up of food" that man consumes, *annamayamhi manah*. In the Hindu schemata of psychology, body, *shrir*, consciousness, *cita*, and mind, *manah*, are the basic constituents of human personality. While the body is created and is perishable, the soul is imperishable. The *cita* is the result of past *karma* and mind is material, created by the food, a man consumes. Thus, food acquires a central, soterological significance in human life, since the *karma* follows the mind in this life, and the deposit of *karma* in previous births determines the course of transmigration, the circle of births and deaths, the curse of cyclic existence, a release, *mukti*, from which is the *Hindu summum bonum*. Thus the food, that a man eats, acquires a peculiar centrality of significance in the Hindu scheme of

22. *Anandu anandu sabh ko kahai anandu gur te Jania.*

Jania anandu sada gur te kirpa kare piaria. Kari kirpa kilabikhu kate gian anjan saria.

Andarahu jin ka mohu tuta tin ko sabad sace svaria.

Kahai Nanaku ihu anandu hai anandu gur te jania.

things that constitute his ultimate concern, and those who misconceive Hindu scruples about food as grounded in his sense of superiority over others are altogether mistaken. For a Hindu, food is not primarily a matter of physical nourishment, as he views it as the primary source of psychic influences on his mind and thus a matter of extreme spiritual concern. What, how and where he eats is a matter of his private religion and not a matter of lack of feelings of human brotherliness in him. It is an unfortunate and thoroughly mistaken notion that Hindu commensality, the rule that food is to be eaten and received only in the presence of members of a certain group, is either disregard of others' human dignity or simple xenophobia, an irrational hatred for the foreigner. In this background the Hindu has classified "food" in accordance with the three Fundamental Modalities of All that Exists, the three *gunas* of the ancient Samkhya system, the *sattava*, the *rajas* and the *tamas*. The first represents harmony, clarity and equipoise; the second, dynamism and activity, and the third, lassitude and confusion. All Existence is modulated and regulated, in varying degrees, by these three *gunas*. The most desirable food, therefore, for a Hindu is the *sattava*-based food. In *Bhagavadagita* the *sattava* foods are described as those that are sweet in taste, luscious and delicious to the palate and giving a feeling of easement when consumed. The Indian preference for *rashgullas*, *gulabjamins*, *halwa* and sweet *pulao* on our menu derives from this ancient Hindu insight into the relationship between food and mind and not because they are adjudged as health-foods or of weight-control caloric value. There are three blemishes as render a food unacceptable to a Hindu: *jatidosha*, uncivil and barbaric qualities of the food itself, such as onion and garlic, *sthandosha*, public and open to the gaze of strangers while being consumed and lastly, *nammitadosha*, arising out of who cooked the food, who touched it and from where it came. It was in the context of these hoary traditions and notions that Guru Amar Dass set up his institution of free common kitchen. The *langar*, now deemed as a necessary adjunct of every sizable Sikh Gurdwara. The Guru made partaking of food in his *langar* as a prerequisite condition for seeking his audience and coming to his presence. The king and the prince, the rich and the pauper, the high caste and the low caste, the Hindu and the Muslim, all had to, and as the chroniclers tell us did comply willingly with this requirement. A Hindu common kitchen wherein all must eat together is simply unthinkable, while there did exist, in medieval, India, the institution of free and common kitchens maintained by Muslim sufi darveshas and holy men. It is on records²³ that Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, following the precedent of his spiritual master, Sheikh Farid Shakaraganj, always insisted on a

23. *Favaid-ul-Fuad*.

visitor to take food first in his kitchen and then come to his presence. The Aulia often used to quote a *hadith* that says that, "he who paid a visit to a living person but took no food there, in fact, visited a dead man." But the institution of Sikh *langar* which Guru Amar Dass perpetuated is distinct and distinguishable in principle and objectives from this Muslim practice of a free kitchen. In three respects the institution of the Sikh *langar* is altogether a novel and revolutionary phenomenon in the history and climate of India : (1) The essence of the Sikh *langar* is not essentially hospitality such as has made Muslim tradition of hospitality famous throughout the world and such as characteristically distinguishes the Muslim human type from most other races and communities of the world. In the Sultanate period in Delhi, it is recorded that, a noted Muslim divine used to walk daily through the streets of the town, chanting : "O Muslims, be true Muslims; sell away all your possessions to practice generous hospitality."²⁴ In the case of the Sikh *langar* the food offered is essentially a trans-substantiated host, symbolising Sikh doctrine of universal brotherhood of man. (2) The Sikh doctrine relates 'food', as such, to nutrition and health, regarding it as a gift from God and disassociates it from the Hindu view of food as the core of psychic life and religious practices. (3) The Sikh doctrine compresses the concept of food-blemishes to just one comprehensive blemish, that the food eaten must be clean, health-promoting and obtained through just and fair means. All these revolutionary ideas Guru Amar Dass propagated and integrated to the Sikh way of life.

X

'Sati' literally means 'one wedded to truth' and its accepted meaning is 'a virtuous wife.' From times immemorial, in our country, it has been recognised as the true test of a *sati* that she cremates her living body along with that of her dead husband. The premier and ancient *Brahmapurana* lays it down as "the highest duty of the woman to immolate herself after her husband, since this is commanded by the *Veda* as a path greatly reputed in all the worlds."²⁵ The Greek and the Muslim invaders into India, during the last 24 centuries have been amazed and awestruck with this custom of *sati* and have viewed it both as a high water mark of human faith fidelity and as an ignoble custom and dreadful barbarity. Diodorus Siculus, the Greek writer of the 2nd century B. C. cynically refers to this custom as "an insurance against the untimely death of husbands," insinuating it as a common practice in ancient India for men to be poisoned by

24. *Ai mussalmanan mussalmani kuned, khanch bifrushedo mehmani kuned.*

25. *Satrinamyan parodharma yadbharatu anuvesnam, vede ca vihito margah sarva lokeshy pujitah—80, 75.*

their women-folk. The sensitive Muslims saw in *sati* a stunning example of undying human love and unconquerable human faith: "Where else in the world, except in the case of a Hindu woman can you find such sublimity of love which expresses itself by dying with the dead!"²⁶ The foreign rulers in India, viewing the custom, generally, as inhuman and repugnant to conscience have tried to discourage or suppress it through coercive power of the state. The Portuguese, in the first half of the 16th century, made *sati* illegal in Goa. Emperor Akbar disapproved of it in the Institutes of his newfangled religion, *dini-ilahi* but promulgated no state-law to forbid it. Jehangir, in his early rule, found new converts to Islam practising *sati* in the Himalayan foothills and sternly forbade it. Shah Jehan made it illegal for *sati* to be performed near Muslim cemeteries. Aurangzeb, in 1664 A. D., issued an edict forbidding *sati* throughout his dominions but his Government found itself powerless to enforce it. Lord William Bentick, by Madras regulation 1 of 1829, declared *sati* illegal in Bengal and punishable by criminal courts. *Sati* continued in Punjab upto its annexation of the British Empire in 1849. But such is the pull and thrill of the mystique of *sati* to the Hindu mind that the practice has staged a nostalgic comeback here and there. After the British left India in 1947, Guru Amar Dass made a seminal pronouncement on the subject of *sati* by deepening its spiritual significance and annulling its draconic requirement of cremation of the living wife. His relevant revelation in the Guru Granth declares :

*"A virtuous wife is not one who burns herself alive with her dead husband. She indeed, would be a sati who dies through shock of separation. But, says Nanak, a true sati is she who bears the shock of separation with courage and lives her natural span of life in a disciplined, dignified and virtuous manner."*²⁷

This revelation of the Guru firstly, deprecates *sati* through cremation of the living wife and secondly, approves of an enlightened observation in the classical Sanskrit text, *Bhartriharinirvedam*, of Harihar Upadhaya (10.c.), wherein queen Bhannumati tells her husband Bhartrihari that for a truly virtuous wife it is unnecessary to mount a funeral pyre alive, and subsequently she proves it by dying of shock on hearing of the fatal news of the death of her husband. Thirdly, the Guru explains the Sikh doctrine on *sati* by upholding the high Hindu idealism implicit in

26. *Cun zane hindu kase dar ashqi diwana nist, sukhtan bar shama-i-murdeh kare har parvaneh nist.*

27. *Satian eha na akhiani jo marhian lagg jallan, Nanak satian janiann je birahe chot marran. Nanak so satian janiann sil santokh rahann.*

sati, and by deepening and interiorising its meaning which cleans the ideal of all its objectionable features relating to burning of the living wife. Never before or since in history has a lofty human ideal, thus been so firmly upheld and repudiated simultaneously.

XI

The question of social status of woman and her political rights is distinct and distinguishable from her capacity and right to full religious experience and to administer religion's ecclesiastical and church affairs. The one concerns social and political customs and prejudices and the other the innate capability of the human female to control and guide institutions and organisations of religion. While in almost all the higher world-religions, the capacity of woman to participate in the highest levels of religious experience is conceded, her innate capacity to guide and control institutions of religion is not so conceded. The reason for this denial is stated not as custom, tradition or political exigency, but her psychological structure and innate disability arising out of the 'female-principle' of the Creation. "Under no circumstances must a woman be permitted to hold a position of authority over others or control of herself", *na satriyam scantantrayam arahant*²⁸ is the draconian rule laid down by Hindu law-givers. Gautam, the Buddha bemoaned before his confidential secretary, Ananda :

*"If women had not received permission to enter the Buddhist Order, the good religion would have lasted for a thousand years, but now, O, Ananda, because of women entrants, it will decay and wither after five hundred years."*²⁹

The prestigious Bayadavi in his authoritative commentary on the *Koran*, says that :

*"Allah has preferred men to women in the matter of mental ability and their power for performance of duties."*³⁰

Sheikh Mohammad Hussain Makhloof, the Mufti of Egypt, in a *fatwa* (1952) had declared that,

"There is no authority in Islamic social system for giving the women

28. *Manusmriti Baudhayansmriti, Gautamsmriti.*

29. *Mahaparinibbansutta.*

30. *Anwar-ul-tanzil.*

the right to vote and to be elected to Parliament owing to their inherently unstable nature, on the authority of Islamic law."

In the synagogue the women are inactive participants in the worship-service and sit veiled on the women's side usually separated from the rest by an opaque lattice. Saint Paul carried over the rule of the synagogue into the Christian congregation that, women should keep silence in the churches. Today, this rule is still the basis of the refusal to ordain women³¹ as priests in the Roman Catholic Church. In startling contrast to these age-old and almost universal convictions and practices of mankind, Guru Amar Dass, over four hundred years ago, appointed and ordained a large number of women preachers under the nomenclature of the Sacred Stools', *pirhian*, and it is on record that, at least one: woman was ordained and appointed as a Sikh bishop, Mathura Devi, wife of Murari. This is a truly remarkable phenomenon in the history of world-religions and marks a most new insight into and makes a most liberal estimation of the innate capacities of woman in relation to the highest spheres of human activity, the religion.

XII

How is 'revelation' different from literature and, is literary craftsmanship integral to and peculiar to each one of them, are questions that have occupied the subtlest and loftiest human minds throughout the history of religion. The cognoscenti now generally appreciate the distinction between the 'revelation' and 'literature'. Literature is of secular and rational origin while revelation is of divine inspiration. Literature is product of conflict within the writer himself while revelation, by an external suprahuman agency. Literature may be judged by its quality and effect while revelation is characterised by its autonomous validity, *svatesiddha* as the Hindus say. Guru Amar Dass makes most unambiguous pronouncement on the subject :

*"There is no utterly trustworthy guidance for man except the Divine revelation. Mere literature is infected with uncertainty and error for, its origin is no better than human, ever prone to misknowing."*³¹

XIII

In the holy *Koran* is staked the claim that it is inimitable, because it is revelation and not the creation of human mind. "If the mankind and the *jinn* gathered together to produce the like of this *Koran*, they could not produce the like thereof even if they should help one another" (17:89)

31. *Satguru bajhon hor kachi Bani, kahinde kace sunade kace kacion akh vakhani.*

On the basis of his many theological works have been written on the subject of 'inimitability of Koran', i' jazi-quran. The claim is based on the holy book's literary craftsmanship, its rhyming prose, the principle of which has not yet been properly analysed. T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), the doyen of modern English literature, has introduced a literary craftsmanship in English poetry which has no precedent in English or other world-literatures. It has been given the name of 'Cyclic Technique in Poetry'. In this technique the problem is stated but is not resolved and ended. There is a halt and a recovery and a recurring branching off to come back to the topic by another road and from another angle. Here is an example :

*And, indeed there will be time,
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back on the window panes.
There will be time, there will be time.
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet.
There will be time to murder and create.
And time for all the works and days of hands,
That lift and drop a question in your plate.*

It is T. S. Eliot too who has conspicuously broadened the base of literature into theology and philosophy. Both of these features of Eliot's poetry appear to have been curiously forestalled in the revelations of Guru Amar Dass in the Guru Granth :

- (1) Bhagtan ki chal nirali chala nirali bhagtan kerī bikhām marg chālana.
- (2) Iha sohila sabad sohava, sabada sohava sada sohila satguru sunaia.
- (3) Je ko sikhū satguru seti sanamukhu hovai, hovai ta sikhū, sanamukhu koi jiah rahai gur nale.
- (4) Jiahu maile baharahu nirmal, baharahu nirmal jiahu ta maile tini janam juai haria.

Again, when Eliot, in his *Four Quarters*, speaks of "intersection of the Timelessness with Time", is he trying to say and convey what Guru Amar Dass reveals in his *Anandu Ramkali*, *eh man meria tu sada rahu hari nale ? O my mind , remain ever with God.'*



THE GOLDEN TEMPLE: ITS THEO-POLITICAL STATUS

The world-famous Golden Temple of the Sikhs, situated at Amritsar in India, bears *Harimandir*, 'the Temple of God', as its original name and it forms an island in a lake to which the name of *Amritsar* was given by the Nanak V, Guru Arjan (1563-1606), in the year 1589, when he laid the foundations of what is now known as the Golden Temple, and the town which grew around this Mecca of the Sikhs has subsequently acquired the name of Amritsar.

The Nanak V, requested his great contemporary mystic and Muslim savant, Mir Mohammed Muayyinu'l Islam, popularly known as *Mian Mir*, to lay the foundation stone of the temple and this fact, as well as the name bestowed on the lake, bears a basic significance in relation to the Sikh doctrines.

The impact of Islam on North Western India in the 11th century had been through military conquest and sword and this had naturally slated reactions in the proud and sensitive, Hindu mind, that resulted in impassable barriers of hatred and prejudice between the two world-culture currents, and their mutual contacts have, therefore, left irritating and unfortunate monuments of bigotry and misunderstanding, spiritual and physical, that still mark the Indian scene.

The Sikh prophets, the Nanaks, desired to level down these barriers with a view to discover and provide a common spiritual ground for the two, Hinduism and Islam, where Hinduism gets over its injured superiority and sense of exclusiveness, and Islam, its arrogance, born out of military superiority. The Nanak V declared :

Musalmānu momdil hovai antar ki....

mal dil te dhovai,

duniyā rang na āvai nede jio kusum pat ghio pāk harā.

(Guru Granth, Maru-V. 13 iii. 12)

"Let Muslims rediscover the truth that the essence of religious practice is compassion and its goal, the purification of soul, and the political utilitarianism is foreign to Islam as such, and let the Hindus concede that Islam, thus understood, is as respectable and ceremoniously pure as the flowers, the silk, the deerskin and the butter-fat."

Sikhism— A Meeting Ground of Hinduism and Islam

And since Sikhism was to be this common meeting ground between these two world-culture streams, that is why a prominent Muslim divine was asked to lay the foundation of the Golden Temple. *Amritsar*, name was given to the lake encircling this temple, as *amrta* means, the enduring principle of all that is, in Hindu metaphysical thought, and water is the symbol of the first impulse of manifestation the Unmanifest in Aryan thought-idiom, and the Golden Temple in the embrace of the waters of Immortality, thus, was intended to be a profound symbol of future confluence of the world-cultures into a universal culture for the mankind.

In this temple, the proposed centre of a world-culture and world religion, the Nanak V installed the Sikh scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib*, and ever since, the presiding place, even when the Sikh Gurus were personally present, has remained reserve for the Book and the religious ceremonial and services have exclusively and always consisted of prayers to the singing praises of, and meditation upon God in this *sanctum-sanctorum* of Sikhism.

It was in 1609, that the Nanak VI, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) erected the *Akal Takht* edifice opposite the entrance bridge-head of the Golden Temple, upon which the Guru sat in state, wearing two swords of dominion over the two worlds, the seen and the unseen and the peculiar Sikh doctrine of Double Sovereignty took birth, the essence of which is that a man of religion must always owe his primary allegiance to Truth and mortality, and he must never submit to the exclusive claim of the secular state to govern the bodies and minds of men and the whole of subsequent Sikh History must be seen as an unfoldment of this Sikh attitude, if it is to be properly understood, the Nanak X, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) explained this doctrine to Mughal emperor Aurangzib, in a written communication the *Zafarnameh* (1707), in the following words :

Cunkâr az hameh hilte darguzusht, halal ast burdan b-shamshir dast.

“When all means of peaceful persuasion fail, it is legitimate (for a man of religion) to move his hand to the hilt of the sword.”

The Sikh doctrine of Double Sovereignty promulgated in the beginning of the 17th century, has curiously modern ring and flavour as from 19th century onwards, a growing school of writers in Europe have tended to think on the lines in which it is grounded. The main substance of this doctrine is that any sovereign state which includes Sikh population and groups as citizens, must never make the paranoia pretensions of almighty absolutism entailing the concept of total power, entitled to rule over the bodies and minds of men, in utter exclusiveness. Any state which lays such claims *qua* the Sikhs, shall automatically forfeit its moral right to demand allegiance of the Sikhs and there is thus an internal antagonism between such a state

and the collective community of the Sikhs, represented by the order of the Khalsa, and in this deadly duel the State shall never emerge out as finally victorious, for self-destruction is the fruit of the seed of nonlimitation, and the status and the prerogatives and the Khalsa are imprescriptible.

The 19th century German writer, Schulse supports the basic premise of this doctrine by asserting that the view that the State is absolutely supreme and incapable of doing wrong is misconceived and dangerous. (*Deutsches Staatsrecht*, Vol I, Sec. 16) The whole Sikh history is relentless *jehād* against this dangerous misconception, and the Sikhs have always insisted that any State fit and entitled to demand their allegiance must *ab initio* recognise and concede its own self-limited character, arising out of the principles of morality, the teachings of Religion, the principles of abstract justice, the principles of the Sikhs' metalegal constitution which lays down that, (1) they must be approached and dealt with at State level as a collective group and entity, and (2) they must be governed impersonally, that is, through the rule of law and not by arbitrary will, and this self-limitation must further be circumscribed by the immemorial customs, long-established traditions and the facts of the history of the Sikhs. This Sikh doctrine is, in essence, the same which today finds explicit expression in the modern concept of the pluralistic State, which recognises that the State, in practice, is the government, and the government is no more than a group in control of the governmental machinery, and that the aims and objects of this group, may any time clash with those of other groups, not in power. The government may be the temporary principal of all such groups, but it is only *primus inter pares*, the elder amongst equals; it is not the sole repository of power or focal of loyalty. This is, indeed, the sole essence of the Sikh doctrine of Double Sovereignty, which finds powerful support in the writings of Professor Harold J. Laski, Mr. G.D.H. Cole, and the French jurist, Duguit, and also Dr. J. N. Figgis.

The Sikh revolt during the 17th and 18th centuries, against the Mughal State was, in reality, an attempt to assert their doctrine of Double Sovereignty against the Muslim absolutist theomonist theory of State, as a result of which the Sikhs had no pass through the valley of death, as the narrative that follows would show, before they emerged out with the sceptre of political sovereignty in their hands, and it would be well to understand that the present bitterness and misunderstanding that clouds relations between the Sikhs and the State is also grounded in the same doctrinal conflict.

In the 1708 Guru Gobind Singh, after protracted, discussions and parleys with the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah, the son and successor of Aurangzeb, came to the firm conclusion that "all means of peaceful persuasion" had failed, and it had, therefore, become the right and duty of Sikhs to "move the hand to the hilt of the sword", and in the same year, (February, 1708) the Guru initiated a Hindu yogi and occultist, Madhudas Bairagi, as a Sikh and renamed him Banda Singh, and then

appointed him the Genaralissimo of the Sikhs, after conferring upon him the military title Bahadur. Banda Singh Bahadur, was then orderd to proceed to Punjab with the assignment of "due chastisement of the Mughal rulers, who have usurped the power that belongs to the people, condign punishment of those guilty of atrocities, destruction of their military bases and reestablishment of the freedom of the people."¹

Banda Singh Bahadur carried out his assignment with admirable fidelity and in 1710 declared the freedom of the province of Sirhind, fixed as its capital the fortified Mukhalispur, in the hills, near Ambala, and the Sikhs adopted the legend on their State Seal, which began:

"We hereby place our impress of sovereignty upon both the worlds, the seen and the unseen."²

And thus they reiterated the basic doctrine of Sikhism, that of Double Sovereignty.

After the collapse of political power of the Sikhs under Genaralissimo Banda Singh Bahadur, in 1716, there follows a complete blackout till 1721, when the Sikhs shifted their centre of activities, their spiritual and political capital and their acropolis to the Golden Temple, the lake that sorrounds it, and the complex of buildings, including Akal Takht, that are attached to it.

Ever since 1721, the Golden Temple with the complex of attached structures, has remained the centre of the Sikh world, the Sikh history, the Sikh politics and the Sikh theophany. Throughout the last 250 years, whether the Sikhs were declared as outlaw by the State, whether the Golden Temple and its adjuncts were reduced to mass of ruins or they were forcibly occupied by the State whether the Sikhs were a sovereign people or politically, subjugated, they have never abandoned or compromised the position that (1) the Golden Temple and its adjuncts are the hub of the Sikh world, not as a matter of concession by any worldly power, but as the inherent right of the Sikh people, *sui generis* and inalienable, and (2) there is no ultimate dichotomy in the true Sikh doctrine between this world and the next, the secular and the religious, the political and the spiritual.

Status and Position of the Golden Temple

This position and this status of the Golden Temple is unique in the religious or political centres of world history.

It is the Mecca of the Sikhs, because it is the religious centre of the Sikhs, but it is vastly more.

1. *Turken te nij levān bair pāthio Gur ne mujh ko kar bandā, mai kar khuar bajide ko mar Sarhind ujad karehon suchhanda.*

—Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, Kavita (1880), III, 752.

2. *"Sikkeh zad bar har du alam."*

It is the St. Peter's at Rome, for it is the capital of Sikh theocracy, but it is very much more and also something less and different. Sikhism has no ordained priestly class and, therefore, there can be no theocratic political state of the Sikhs in which the priests rule in the name of an invisible God. They have no corpus of civil law of divine origin and sanction and they, therefore, must have a state based on secular non-theocratic laws. It is, more, because it remains the real capital of ultimate Sikh allegiance, whatever the political set-up for the time being.

It is the Varanasi or Banaras of Sikhism, because it is the holiest of the holies of the faith, but it is not precisely that because the true Sikh doctrine does not approve of any tradition or belief which seeks to tie up theophany with geography.

It is the Jerusalem of Sikhism because it is the historical centre of the epiphany of Sikhism but it is not precisely that because Sikhism, as a religion, is not history-grounded, that is, its validity is not tied up with or dependent upon any historical event.

It is not precisely the political capital of the Sikhs, because political capital presupposes a state under the control of the Sikhs, and when the Sikhs do have such a state, it is not imperative that its administrative centre must be at Amritsar, and even when it is, the Golden Temple and its precincts shall still retain their peculiar independent character apart from this administrative centre. When the Sikhs do not have a sovereign state of their own, the Golden Temple, with its surrounding complex, continuously retains its theo-political status, which may be suppressed by political power, compromised by individuals or questioned by politicians, but which remains and never can be extinguished, for, it is *sui generis* and inalienable, and imprescriptible.

It is owing to this unique status, grounded in certain peculiar doctrines of Sikhism that, many misunderstandings continuously arise concerning the use of the Golden Temple with its surrounding complex, for 'political purposes', for allowing ingress into it and housing of those whom the political state may deem as 'offenders', and for pursuing, 'extra religious activities' from inside its precincts. The Sikhs, themselves, have never viewed any of these activities, started or controlled from inside the precincts of the Golden Temple, as either improper, or repugnant to the Sikh doctrine, or contrary to the Sikh historical tradition. The reasons for this Sikh attitude are three, in the main, not singly, but collectively:

One reason is that this geographical site itself is charged with theopathic influences such as no other known and still accepted site on earth, including the old site of the Solomon's Temple, revered by three great religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, can claim to be.

Prehistoric Antiquity of Amritsar

Ever since the man on this earth became civilized in any comprehensive sense, about four or five millennia ago, imagination seems to find some foothold to

countenance the belief that the lake engirdling the Golden Temple most extensive pre-classical civilization of the most basic activity of man, the religion. The most extensive pre-classical civilization of the world, the Indus Valley civilization, stretched, in the third millennium B.C. from Rupar at the foot of the Simla hills to Suthagendor near the shores of the Arabian Sea, a stretch of one thousand miles, and the site of the Golden Temple lies in the heart of this great river-system. The prominently situated 'Bath' or *sarovar* in the newly dug up ancient mound of Mohenjodaro, as readily suggests to mind the central significance of water reservoirs in the metaphysical thought idiom and religious practices of these ancient people as it springs before the mind's eye, the Golden Temple, lake-surrounded.

Our proto-historical records, the *Pauranas*, and the pre-Christian era Buddhist traditions definitely assert that, from ancient times, there has existed a natural and holy lake of water³, where the Golden Temple is now situated and the geo-physical layout of the site amply confirms the probability of these assertions. A bird's eye view of the area, from an aeroplane even today would confirm the conclusion that, this site must have been a natural water reservoir for thousands of years past. The Vedic and Buddhist traditions of holiness attached to this site and the lake suggest an earlier and more ancient origin of this attachment, extending back to the third and second millennia of the Indus Valley civilization, on the basis of the historical trend that once a holy place, always so and that, a new holiness must be grounded in some older one.

The creative imagination, therefore, is justified in discerning grounds for the belief, not altogether fanciful, that the holy lake and the site of the Golden Temple, was an ancient centre of theophanic human activity, at the dawn of human civilization, round about 5,000 years ago, peopled by the Mohenjodaro race and further, that it was an equally well revered spot for the theomatic *rishis* of the Vedas.

It is interesting to recall here that when Guru Arjan was having the ancient alluvium of this lake cleared, a sealed masonry subterranean dome was sounded and exposed, which being opened up revealed a macerated *yogi* in lotus-posture, immersed in seedless *nirbija trance*. When the Guru reanimated him, he disclosed that he went into his trance 'thousands of years ago', with the object of experiencing the somatic touch of the Nanak, before entering into the utter Void.

3. *In Vaivasyatpaurana, a genre of ancient Sanskrit text reduced into literary form in about the first century of Christian era, but of much greater antiquity of contents there is mention of Amarkunda (aynonym for Amritsaras, Punjabi, Amritsar), 'a holy lake situated betwixt the rivers Vipdsd (Modern Bias) and Airdvatt (Modern Ravi)', for the possession of which, in the pre-History epoch of creation, a fierce struggle took place between the gods and anti-gods, for, the out come of this struggle would decide as to whether the forces of religion will triumph in the current world age or those of irreligion. The gods came out victorious and Amritsar is now the centre of oocumenical religion.*

This spot was commemorated by the Guru by the subsidiary lake, Santokhsar, which stands till today. Were some of the Vedic hymns actually revealed to the Aryans at the banks of this ancient holy lake, just as the major portions of the *Guru Granth* in the 17th century were? Intuitive imagination guesses so, and there is no good reason to think otherwise. In the early centuries of the Christian era, when the oecumenical religion of the Mahayan took birth in the North West India in the form of the original *Prajnaparmitta* and the *Sadharmapundrika sutras*, the Golden Temple site and the holy lake were already an active centre of beehive Buddhist monk-communities, of which the great Nagarjun and Aryadeva themselves might have been the Abbots, during the periods of their creative activity, and if herein the intuitive imagination hovers near the truth, then it emerges that the site of the Golden Temple and the banks of its surrounding waters are the scenes of earliest spiritual activity of the civilized man, the highest watermark of the theomancy of the Vedic Aryans, the greatest achievement of the Buddhist mind and the most glorious efflorescence of the *genius loci* of the Punjab.

Coming to near modern history and times, the founder of the Lamaist Buddhism in Tibet, Padamsambhava, a professor at Nalanda university who was invited to Tibet by the great king, Khri-sron-Ide-btsan (745-797) in 747 A.D. is the patron-saint of Tibet and one of the greatest figures of Buddhism, and he is called 'Lotus-born', to signify his theomorphic status, while his biographies unanimously agree that the 'Lotus' out of which he took his non-human birth, floated on the limpid waters of a sacred lake, which is identified as now surrounding the Golden Temple. To this day, devout Tibetans make long and hazardous journeys to visit and pay homage to this sacred spot of the marvellous origination of the *Guru Rimpoche*, the Previous Master.

If many of these surmises lack palpable root and material evidence, the fact does not render the intangible pull of this picture on the racial subconscious mind, any the less potent, and, indeed, the circumstances multiplies this potency manifold, as keen students of religious psychology well know.

Such a site, surcharged with such ancient and potent spiritual influences it was that the Sikh Gurus chose as the centre of the new world religion and world culture, which they inaugurated, and instinctively sensing its high spiritual potency in relation to the future of mankind, the Sikhs, during the last 250 years, that the secular state powers, in utter disregard and blind ignorance of, the implications of the Sikh doctrines have tended to regard this geographical spot as just another area subject to their political domain, have paid the highest price demanded of them, in vindication of the true theo-political status of the Golden Temple.

The second reason, therefore, which fortifies the basic Sikh attitude concerning the theo-political status of the Golden Temple is grounded in the nimbus of the Sikh history that hangs over it and provides guiding precedents to the Sikh mind.

Till the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, the Nanaks, the Sikh Gurus, were centres of the Sikh movement, and afterwards, Banda Singh Bahadur took over the command of their political affairs. It was after the execution of Banda Singh Bahadur, and the collapse of the Sikh sovereignty which he had established on the political plane, that the Sikhs, collectively assumed the rights and duties of their doctrine of Double Sovereignty, and in 1721, Bhai Mani Singh was installed as the head-priest of the Golden Temple, who, immediately took steps to revive the true theo-political status of this place. A free community kitchen for the visitors and the disabled was started and politico-civic activities of the Sikh people were gathered afresh to be rooted around the Golden Temple. Khushwaqt Rai, the author of the manuscript *Tarikhi Sikhan*, (1811) says that at this period, the Sikhs "lived in caves and thorny bushes, and subsisted on roots and blades of grass, and Zakriya Khan, the military governor of the Punjab, wondered that the grass-eaters should be so bold as to lay claim to sovereignty." (*Folio 44.b*).

Mughals Conceded the Status of Subnation to Sikhs

In 1733, when the Mughal government found that extreme measures of persecution had failed to persuade the Sikhs to compromise their basic doctrines and attitudes, they conceded to the Sikhs the status of a sub-nation, an autonomous political status, analogous to that offered to the Sikhs in early 1947 by Mr. Jinnah of the Muslim League. A revenue grant of a hundred thousand rupees and the Letters Patent of the Nawab were conferred upon the Sikhs, which they accepted with the reservation that, "the Khalsa meant to rule freely, cannot accept permanently, a subordinate position." (Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Orient Longmans, pp. I, 121) All these developments took place and were finalized within the precincts of the Golden Temple, in front of the *Akal Takht* and further, these arrangements show that the government of the day, even during those early days of Sikh history, fully appreciated that the Sikh doctrines envisage that the state must deal with them as one people, and not by atomising them into individual citizens. Immediately, at the conclusion of these arrangements, the Sikhs proceeded to establish five military cantonments, one at the lake of the Golden Temple and the other four, at the remaining four sacred tanks that constitute the adjuncts of the Golden Temple, the Ramsar, the Bibeksar, the Lachhmansar and the Kaulsar. These arrangements, by their very nature, were doomed to failure and consequently, in 1736, the Mughal government authorities occupied the Golden Temple and its precincts, and it was under these circumstances that, Bhai Mani Singh approached the authorities for permission to celebrate the Sikh consortium of *divāli* in November, 1738 and he undertook to pay a sum of Rs. five thousand to the state for police arrangements, on the explicit condition that the government would not interfere, directly or indirectly, in the

right of the Sikhs to collect at the Golden Temple, in complete freedom. Since the government authorities deliberately broke the terms of the agreement, and as is the invariable custom of governments, accused Bhai Mani Singh of having done it instead, Bhai Mani Singh accepted the penalty of death, inflicted by hacking his body into bits, limb by limb, rather than agree to pay the stipulated amount of Rs. five thousand, or earning a reprieve otherwise.

The next year, 1739, saw the invasion of India by the terrible Nadir Shah who sacked Delhi, put its inhabitants to sword and took away the peacock throne and the *Kohi-noor* diamond, as loot in his haversack. It was the 'grass-eaters', the Sikhs alone, out of all the peoples of India, who then came out of their caves and thorny bushes to attack the rear of the returning invader, till he reached Lahore, exhausted by this harassment, and the following conversation is recorded by a contemporary, between Nadir Shah and Zakariya Khan, the military governor of the Punjab:

- Nadir Shah** : Who are these mischief-makers, any way?
Zakariya Khan : They are a group of vagabond mendicants who visit their Guru's tank twice a year and then disappear.
Nadir Shah : Where do they live?
Zakariya Khan : Their homes are their horse-saddles.
Nadir Shah : Take care, my son, the day is not distant when these rebels will take possession of thy country.

The Sikhs Avenge Profanity of the Golden Temple

Here again, it was recognized by all concerned that, the Golden Temple is the hub of the Sikh universe. After its occupation by government in 1736, the Temple and its adjuncts were put to profane secular use, and were converted into central offices of the district officer, Mussalih-ul-din, popularly known as *Massa Ranghar*. When the news of this profane secular use of the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Golden Temple reached a group of Sikh refugees in the far off Jaipur, two of them travelled all the way to Amritsar, after taking a solemn vow that they would either cut off and bring back to Jaipur, the head of this arrogant government official or never return alive at all. In early August, 1740, this presumptuous government functionary was beheaded on the spot, during the early office hours, and his head was carried to the assembled Sikhs at Jaipur, in vindication of the Sikh doctrine of Double Sovereignty, with the Golden Temple as its acropolis.

The Sikh people thus lived a precarious existence, as stateless outlaws and aliens in their own homeland, when in 1746, Lakhpatrai, a Hindu *Dewān*, or chief minister of the military governor of the Punjab, took it into his head to out-herod Herod, to display greater zeal even than the Mughals to destroy the Sikhs and Sikhism and

besides ordering a genocide of the Sikhs, caused it to be, "announced with the beat of drum that no one should read the Sikh scriptures, anyone taking the name of the Guru should be arrested and his belly ripped open. Even the word, *gur* (molasses), which sounded like *Guru* was not to be uttered, but the word, *rori* was to be used instead. The word, *granth* was also to be replaced with, *pothi*. Many volumes of the holy *Granth* were collected and thrown into rivers and wells. The tank of the Amritsar was filled with earth." (*A Short History of the Sikhs*, op.cit.page 1,132)

It is not to be supposed that a man of the keen intelligence of his race and an energy peculiar to that by a subordinate position inspired, the chief minister Lakhpatrai would have missed the central significance of the Golden Temple and its adjuncts in the Sikh scheme of things, and therefore, whereas he strove to destroy the cultural roots of the Sikhs, he did not neglect the Golden Temple in view of its theo-political status.

In March 1748, the Sikhs emerged from their hideouts and drove away the occupation forces from the Golden Temple, built a mudfort to defend it, and reiterated that the Sikh people were an indivisible entity and sovereign *sul generis*. (Giani Gian Singh, *Panthprakash*, Vartak, Delhi, 1892, p. 907)

In full realization that, in the plains of Amritsar, neither their fighting strength nor the flimsy protection of mud-walls could save them from sure destruction by the Mughals, they resolved that, "no better death is conceivable for a Sikh than that which overtakes him while defending the great cause of Sikhism at this centre of Sikhism." (Rattan Singh, Bhangoo, *Prachin Panthprakash* (1837), Amritsar, 1914, p. 325) It must always be borne in mind that this 'Great Cause' is essentially theo-political in content and not merely sorteriological, in the scheme of peculiar Sikh values, a position which is not correctly appreciated by those who honestly castigate Sikhs for mixing up politics with religion.

In 1749, the Sikhs cleared the holy lake of Amritsar of the debris with which it was gutted by the chief minister Lakhpatrai, and in 1757, the Afghan conqueror, Ahmed Shah Abdali, invaded India for the fourth time, when he found, as before, that the Sikhs, of all peoples of India, resented his incursions into their country the most and made no secret of this resentment. Well understanding the theo-political status of the Golden Temple and its adjuncts, the redoubtable Abdali, had the temple demolished, its adjuncts destroyed and its lakes filled up and ploughed over, a strange precursor of the Second World War Morgenthau plan of the Allies, calculated to eviscerate culturally and industrially the German people. The Sikhs, however, refused to be cowed down, and in April, 1758, when the combined forces of the Marathas and the Sikhs had succeeded in driving out of the country the Afghan occupation forces, the Golden Temple was rebuilt and its holy lake cleared up, through the labour of the enemy prisoners-of-war and under the direct supervision of the famous Maratha chiefs, Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar,

who then humbly made an offering of Rs. one hundred twenty-five thousand at the Golden Temple and received ceremonial robes of honour from its head priest. These Maratha chiefs well understood that the restoration of the true theo-political status of the Golden Temple was an integral part of their grand national project of regaining liberty of the people and the freedom of India.

In November, 1760, the Sikhs again assembled before the *Akal Takht*, at the Golden Temple and declaring themselves as the *Sarbatt Khalsa*, a Sikh theo-political doctrine, by which the Sikhs assume the powers and status of the centralized conscience and will of the people, resolved to take possession of Lahore, the seat of the Punjab government, a project delayed somewhat by the fifth invasion of the Abdali, the same year.

Sikhs Rescue Hindu Women from Hordes of Abdali

Abdali crushed the Marathas as an all-India power in the historic battle of Panipat, fought on January 14, 1761, but when the victorious invader was returning to Afghanistan, the Sikh chiefs again assembled at the Golden Temple and resolved to take all possible measures to rescue the Hindu and Maratha young women being carried away as war booty by the Afghans. In pursuance of this resolution, the Sikhs made a determined attack of the rear of the foreigner at the Goindwal ferry of River Beas, and rescued over two thousand young women from the clutches of the Abdali and made arrangements to return them to their original homes. (James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*, London, 1778, p. II, 22)

This process of rescuing young women, the Sikhs followed, till the invader crossed the River Jhelum, and this whole campaign was considered, resolved upon and sustained from the Golden Temple and its precincts.

Abdali's Vengeance on Sikhs

In 1762, Abdali returned to India on his sixth invasion, with the specific object of liquidating the Sikhs completely and finally, of destroying their cultural and spiritual roots and of extirpating their very memory from the minds of the people, so that there remains then, no power in India cherishing the temerity of opposing him. In a lightning attack, this greatest of generals that Asia has produced the Abdali put to sword a large portion of the Sikh people men, women, and children, over thirty thousand of them near Ludhiana, took possession of the two original volumes of the holy *Granth*, prepared by Nanak V and Nanak X and then proceeded to complete his task by blowing up the Golden Temple with gun powder, destroyed its other adjuncts, and filled the holy lake, after desecrating it 'with the blood of cow.' (*A Short History of the Sikhs*, op.cit.p.1, 171) The Abdali, knowing full well the theo-political significance of the Golden Temple, had these operations carried out under his personal supervision, and a consequence of which he was wounded on the nose by a flying

brick-piece on April 10, 1762, which wound remained a festering incurable sore till he died of it, of October 16, 1772, at Toba Maruf in the Suleman hills of Afghanistan.

The Abdali, however, had stayed in the Punjab throughout the year, 1762, and on 17th October, 1762 more than sixty thousand Sikhs assembled at the ruins of the Golden Temple to challenge and chastise the Abdali for the arrogant sacrilege he had committed. Offers of peace and negotiations made by the Abdali were contemptuously and summarily rejected by the Sikhs and they inflicted a signal defeat on him and forced him to retire towards Lahore, and thus the Sikhs sought to vindicate theo-political status of the Golden Temple. Charat Singh the grand-father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was there placed in charge of restoring and rebuilding the Golden Temple and its holy lake.

It was on April 10, 1763, when the Sikhs as usual, had assembled at the Golden Temple in their bi-annual concourse that,

"Some brahmins of Kasur came and complained against the Afghan inhabitants of their city, especially against the grandee Uthman Khan, who had forcibly carried away the wife of one of them and converted he to Islam. Hari Singh Bhangi volunteered to help the aggrieved brahmins, and being supported by Charat Singh, after making a theo-political resolution, *gurmatā*, led an expedition against Kasur. Uthman Khan with five hundred of his men was killed and the brahmin lady was restored to her husband." (Ghulam Mohayudin, *Twarikhi Punjab*, Persian Ms. (1848); also, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, op. cit. p. 1, 174)

In October, 1764 Ahmad Shah Abdali, invaded India of the seventh time, and on December 1, 1764, he paid a military visit to the Golden Temple to satisfy himself that the Sikhs no longer used this spot for 'political activities'. He found thirty Sikhs standing guard at the entrance-gate of the Golden Temple, under the captaincy of Jathedar Gurbakhsh Singh, whose mausoleum still stands behind the *Akal Takht*, "They were only thirty in number. But they had not a grain of fear about them... They were resolved to sacrifice their lives for the Guru", tells us, Muslim eye-witness, the author of the *Jangnameh*, (1766) (page 100).

On April 10, 1765, after the return of the Afghan invader, the Sikhs again assembled at the Golden Temple and took the political decision to occupy Lahore, as the seat of the Government of the Punjab and from that day till 1850, the Golden Temple and the Government of the Punjab with its other territories, remained under the sovereign dominion of the Sikhs. The Golden Temple and its adjuncts, even during the Sikh Raj, retained their theo-political autonomy and the writ of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not run within its precincts.

British Device of Managing the Golden Temple

In 1850, the British masters of the Punjab took over the Golden Temple and its adjuncts under their direct administrative control and till the conclusion of the First World War, its theo-political status was maintained and superficially respected through a fiction and a device, into which the Sikhs willynilly acquiesced, after their failure to dislodge the British in more than one attempts. The fiction assiduously cultivated was that the British were the allies of the Khalsa, come to Asia in fulfilment of a prophecy of the Guru, to prepare ground for the eventual victory of the great cause of Sikhism, that of fostering a world-culture and establishing a universal society. The device was of managing the ceremonial and services of the Golden Temple and its adjuncts through a government-appointed Sikh manager, a kind of arrangement which the British rulers of India seemed to aim at but without the accompanying fiction. This arrangement broke down, when at the time of Jallianwala massacre in 1919, the British made the mistake of seeking to use the theo-political status of the Golden Temple in approval of the action of General Dyer. The Sikhs rose as a body against this un-Sikh-like subversion of the true status of the Golden Temple and the Akali movement into which this Sikh resentment took shape, eventually succeeded in wresting the possession and management of the Golden Temple from out of the British hands, who by a statute passed in 1927, handed over not only the Golden Temple, but also other Sikh historical shrines in the Punjab, to a democratically elected body of the Sikhs, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, and this Committee still retains its rights and privileges, thus won.

Throughout the remaining British period, till 1947, the Sikhs zealously guarded the theo-political status of the Golden Temple and throughout, never hesitated to assert their right to use it and its precincts for the integrated Sikh activities of a theo-political character. Those into whose hands has now passed the power of running the Government of India, not only upheld this right of the Sikhs so to use the Golden Temple, but they have, on numerous occasions, themselves so-employed these precincts.

Mahatma Gandhi Hails the Sikh Victory as First Decisive Battle for India's Freedom

When in 1921 the British India Government, through their official representative, handed over the keys of the Golden Temple to Baba Kharak Singh, the veteran Sikh leader, Mahatma Gandhi sent him the following telegram:

"Congratulations. The first decisive battle of Indian freedom has been won."

Mahatma Gandhi well knew, not only all about the theo-political status of the

Golden Temple, but also knew and recognized that it was the centre of a world-movement for a universal culture and a united world-government, and thus it was basically integrated to the *weltanschauung* of Indian freedom, which later he refused to consider as a mere national independence from foreign rule.

Indian Government's Umbrage

It was only after 1947, that, these politicians and men in power took umbrage at the Sikhs' desire to continue in enjoyment of their basic and historic rights pertaining to the true status of the Golden Temple, and as their repeated attempts to obtain control of the Golden Temple and other Sikh shrines, through their party men, the Congressite Sikhs, have been, on every occasion, foiled by a wide-awake and resentful Sikh electorate, their anger and their objections against the Sikhs taking the true theo-political status of the Golden Temple seriously, have mounted. It is now asserted that the Sikhs, in some way, transgress against the Holy Ghost and act treasonably, by employing the Golden Temple and its precincts for the purpose, for which they have always been employed, and for which they were intended from the very beginning. A grievance is loudly made out that the Sikhs, that is, such Sikhs who do not fall in line with the ruling party, mix up the profane with the sacred and thus injure the interests of the Sikh religion, about which their own solicitude is claimed to be greater than of the Sikhs themselves. Be that as it may, it must be granted that, the claims that the Sikhs make and the practices in which they indulge, have no element of novelty in them, for, they are in accord with their past history and traditions, their beliefs and their doctrines, and therein, they are neither guilty of insubordination nor of recalcitrance in relation to those who today yield the power of state, and if they displease and irritate, the fault lies not in their present temper or understanding but in their spiritual constitution and historical psychomental makeup, and that for which no individual is responsible, no individual can be blamed in fairness.

What is the third reason, the psychopathic and historical besides, which accounts for the present Sikh problem, which is again and again concretised around the theo-political status of the Golden Temple?

It has been said earlier that, it arises out of the peculiar doctrinal position of the Sikhs, out of which this theo-political status of the Golden Temple stems. This doctrinal position must eventually be traced to their view of the ultimate reality and the way it has been interpreted in relation to the historical process through which the Sikh movement has passed. Sikhism does not recognize any ultimate dichotomy between the real and the unreal, and hence between the sacred and the profane, though it recognizes a distinction between them, difference of immaculation between them. "God is real and all that He createth is likewise real, and there is naught but that He createth it." (Guru Granth, Gauri, Sukhmani, V.23.5) Sikhism,

therefore, enjoins that a religious life must be lived and practised in the socio-political context. "The God is immanent in the human socio-political activity: know this through an understanding of the Word of the Guru." (Guru Granth, Kanre ki var, III). It is from these premises that the validity of the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Golden Temple, where nothing but the praise of God and meditation upon Him may be made, conjoined to the *Akal Takht*, where the highest and the most hazardous political deliberations and decisions are frequently taken, arises. This ideological base then animates the peculiar metalegal constitution which Guru Gobind Singh finally gave to the Sikh society:

"Previously, the ultimate authority had rested with the Guru... Guru Gobind Singh, however, had abolished the personal Guruship and had vested it in the holy Granth to be administered by the Khalsa... The essential features of this central authority were that it was to be one and that it was to be exercised impersonally." — (*A Short History of the Sikhs*, op.cit. pp.1, 110-111)

Conclusion

From this it follows that, (1) The Sikhs, wherever they happen to be in any appreciable numbers, have a right to be dealt with as a civic group, and an attempt to atomise this group for exercise of political power over them, constitutes an infringement of this right. The postulate behind this law of Sikh social constitution is that on the socio-political level, the significant unit is the group rather than the individual, for, it is the group which lays down norms of conduct for the individual, (2) Political subjugation or slavery is incompatible with the basic constitution of Sikh society, (3) It is the implied right of the Sikhs to assemble freely, as such, to consider and deliberate upon any matters, that they may deem as vital to their interests, irrespective of whether these matters are of this world or of the other, and (4) the Golden Temple, and by analogy, the other Sikh places of Worship, have a theo-political status which is not a matter of concession by a political state, but is a right, *sui generis*.

These are the four socio-political doctrines which are implicit in the Sikh way of life, and it is these doctrines which impel a Sikh and the Sikhs to abhor personal rule or group domination.

George Forester in his book, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, pp. 294-95 writes:

"From the observations that I have made of the Sicques they would appear to be a haughty and high-spirited people. Once I travelled in the company of a Sicque Horseman for some days, and though I made to him several tenders of my acquaintance, he treated them all with great reserve and a covert sort of disdain. There was no reason to be particularly offended by this hauteur towards me, for, he

regarded every other person in the same manner. His answer, when I asked him very respectfully, in whose service he was retained, seemed strikingly characteristic of what I conceive to be the disposition of the Sicque Nation. He said in a tone of voice and with a countenance which glowed with and was keenly animated by the Spirit of liberty and independence, that he disclaimed an earthly master, and that he was a servant of only the Guru on High."

In the Sikh attitudes and the Sikh temper, which apparently irritate and anger those who have now come into power, it is well to perceive that the Sikhs are doing nothing merely to obstruct somebody's enjoyment of power. They are made the way they are, and they act the way they have always acted, and whether they are to be understood and accomodated or mended and bent, their position should be comprehended clearly, without obscuring prejudices. If the Sikh masses are used by individuals for ulterior purposes, the individuals do so by paying in service to the convictions that the Sikhs hold dear, and if they resentfully and doggedly have refused to lend ear to others, it is because the others, through wilfulness or ignorance, have failed to take note of these convictions.

In a democratic society, such as that of India of today, the Sikhs need not encounter any contradictions between their own collective convictions and the requirements of the state to which they owe allegiance. If, therefore, there are frictions, the fault must be found somewhere in the sphere of implementation of true democratic processes and the persons who implement them. A satisfied and properly integrated-to-the-nation Sikh people can be an invaluable and lasting asset to any state, more so to India in the soil and traditions of which they are rooted, just as a frustrated or suppressed Sikh people can be an obvious weakness in the strength of the nation.



SIKHS AND SIKHISM

(Under the auspices of All Canada Sikh Federation, a speech delivered by Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapūr Singh, M.A. (Cantab,) ex-M.P. ex-I.C.S., National Professor of Sikhism, in the Thompson School Auditorium at Vancouver, B.C., on the evening of 7th October, 1974.)

Ladies and Gentlemen :

Since this audience largely consists of Punjabis and men of Indian origin residing in Canada, I would have preferred to speak here either in Punjabi language or in a simple, homely style, so as to communicate to you what my basic ideas are on the subject of Sikhs and Sikhism. But as it is, I have been charged with the task of giving a talk on this subject which has some kind of academic level so that the all Canada Sikh Federation can later on use it as a semipermanent record for the purpose of communicating it to the Non Sikh Canadians and other English-speaking people. Therefore, I humbly request you to bear with me and to be indulgent if sometimes, I seem to be speaking somewhat tiresomely.

Sikhs are a religious community and a political nation simultaneously, and thus they are a unique society of the world. The Sikhs are distinguishable from the Hindu society, which is essentially a territorial culture-group. In the ancient Sanskrit texts, *Vishnu-purana*, in particular, it is laid down that Hindus are those born in the geographical area called, Bharat and this geographical area is delineated as extending from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, Cape Comrin of Europeans, and from the river Indus to the seas that girdle the soil of India, that is, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Sea. Essentially, Hinduism is non-exportable and locatable and its modern conversion and oecumenical activities are unsanctional autonomous area will be carved out in which the Sikhs shall be effective and conclusive at the decision making levels.

Then the British left India, and the Sikhs stuck to their stand unshakable, regarding sacred their understanding with the Hindu leaders, but after August 1947 nothing was done to put these promises into effect, and they seemed to have been forgotten, and slowly and slowly attempts were made to win over and corrupt the individual integrity of Sikh leaders. And then in 1950 the Constitution of India was framed. Nothing was included therein which may have even the remotest semblance to a fulfilment of these two solemn commitments which were made to the Sikhs. Thus, the Sikhs had been tricked to give up their right of sovereignty, their right of

being legitimate heirs to the power and sovereignty of India. And when in 1953, Master Tara Singh asked Jawaharlal Nehru, "Why is it that you people who kept us misled under false promises, as it now seems, for over twenty years, and which promises you repeated again and again solemnly and on behalf of the entire Hindu people, why have you now gone back on them?" The reply of Jawaharlal Nehru was pat and unabashed: "Circumstances have now changed."

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, the constitutionality of these political tricks and manoeuvres might be debatable, but their gross unethicity and cynicity, their low perfidious character, is all too obvious. In the Constitution Assembly, when the Act was passed in 1950, the only two Sikhs, Akali Dal representatives there, stood up and they declared a declaration which is inscribed in the permanent proceedings of the Indian Parliament: "The Sikhs do not accept this Constitution. "Nobody paid the slightest attention to what they were saying, although these Sikhs refused to sign the original copy of the Indian Constitution, which now lies displayed in the library of the Indian Parliament House. They, Sikhs, were just ignored, just as you would ignore the pariah dogs in the street when they are walking back home after a day's work well done, completely ignored. This was done in gross violation of the provisions of the British Parliament's 'Transfer of Power Act of 1947', also. In that Act it is specifically provided that the Indian government at the Centre shall be a Federal, loose centre government having only powers on three subjects: communications, defence and foreign affairs. All other powers shall go to the federating units, the states. It shall be a federal government, it shall not be a highly centralized government. In spite of these legal provisions, the Constituent Assembly, which was packed with the brute majority of only one community, made a constitution which establishes a highly centralized government, entirely in the hands of one community, the majority community, and completely denies the Sikh identity. And ever since 1947, persistent, calculated, well-planned and regular attempts have been made on the cultural, on the political and on the economic levels, not only to disintegrate the Khalsa, the collectively of the Sikh people, once and for all, but to weaken the Sikh citizens economically in such a manner that they are reduced to the status of what is known as, peonage, so that the highest ambition of a Sikh citizen after some time might remain delimited only to become a peon, a night watchman at the palatial door of a rich Hindu industrialist, a driver of his commodious, foreign-imported car, and a mere lowest ranksoldier in the army, so as to provide cannon-fodder whenever the rulers of Delhi wish to pick up a quarrel with somebody.

These, Ladies and Gentlemen, are hard, and if have an ampler opportunity either before you or before any other independent forum of the world, I am in a position to, and I am confident that I can, establish that what I say is literally and more than amply true. There it is, Gentlemen, or, Ladies, where we now stand.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have taken a great deal of your time, and I am grateful

that you have heard me with much patience and, as I have noticed, with great attention. A revealed religion is one which is imparted through a chosen individual as a sequence of his encounter with God. It is not the result of mystical experience of a facet of reality acquired by an individual through discipline or innate propensity. It is not an impersonal empathy with some eternal truths that are seen by individuals, but which in their origin and formulation are wholly and utterly un-man-made, *apaurashaya*, such as the Vedas are claimed to be. The religious truths which Guru Nanak preaches have been revealed to him, so Guru Nanak claims, through a direct and face-to-face encounter with God at some level of consciousness, about which our psychological insights and the verbal technology we have acquired and fashioned to express our ideas, are still almost purblind—not only inadequated but almost purblind incapable of even comprehending and feeling as to what levels of consciousness are, where the phenomenon of revelation takes place.

The turning point in the life of Guru Nanak as a prophet and the founder of a revealed religion came in the year 1496 when he was twenty seven years of age. During these days he was performing his official duties as the Royal storekeeper of the Prince of Sultanpur in the Punjab. He used to, these days, pass out into reveries, almost amounting to trances. On one such occasion, while supervising weighment of official stores, he stopped dead at the count of thirteen which in Punjabi is, "*tera*", meaning also, "I am thine." And Nanak went on repeating, "*tera, tera*" while measure after measure of stores was being passed out. As would be the case anywhere, complaints were made to the Prince about the way in which this Hindu high official, under a Muslim government, was recklessly squandering the Government stores. Not many days after, while the matter of investigating into his alleged misconduct was still engaging the attention of the Prince, Nanak went, as usual, to take his morning dip in the small river that during those days flowed very near, by the side of the town of Sultanpur. This river is now only seasonal and not perennial as in the fifteenth century. This river, called the *Bein*, is still there but comes to life only during the rainy season or when the high mountain snows melt. It is recorded in the Life-Stories of Guru Nanak, which are called, *Janam sakhis*, that after entering the waters of the *Bein* for a dip, he stayed there for full three days and was assumed as drowned and dead, and lost. On the morning of the fourth day he came out of the waters of the river to the spot where his servant, who was to be his lifelong companion, Mardana, was faithfully waiting with Nanak's clothes. The first words that he uttered on emerging from the waters are recorded. He said, "There is no Hindu, no Muslim." It was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission of reconciling the two antagonistic and warring cultures, the Aryan and the Semitic, by pointing out that deeper down in the two, there lay a common substratum of identity. Those acquainted with the doctrines and practices of Yoga know that trance, while submerged for long periods extending over days and months, under deep

waters, is a Yogic skill that may be acquired either by appropriate discipline or as a Godgiven skill from birth. It is called, *jalastambhasamadhi*, in ancient Yogic texts. There is no need to search for other explanations of Nanak's disappearance in the midstream of *Bein* for full three days.

All the chronicles of the *Stories* of the life of Guru Nanak agree that Nanak received his first revelation and his first commission to found and preach a new religion and a new way of life on this occasion.

A revelation is not a psychological process in the individual's mind. It is an encounter with Reality, and the individual does not make a spiritual discovery through his own mental cogitation, but he encounters God and this distinction is fundamental. Henceforth, Nanak becomes Guru Nanak, Nanak the World Teacher. The encounter is described in the *Janam-sakhis* in following words :

"As God willed, Nanak, his devotee, was escorted to His presence, to the divine presence, and then a cup filled with Liquid of Immortality was given him, accompanied by the command : "Nanak, pay attention. This is the cup of holy adoration of my Name; drink it. I am with thee, and thee do I bless and exalt. Go, rejoice in my Name, the Name of God, and preach to others to do the same. Let this be thy calling."

Guru Nanak himself refers to this divine assignment with deep gratitude. He says: "I, an unemployed minstret, was assigned a very rewarding task, indeed."

Guru Nanak thereafter resigned his post and started on long journeys into all directions of the then accessible civilized world, to preach the religion of the Name of God, which is Sikhism. His missionary journeys, throughout the then accessible civilized world of Asia : India, Ceylon, Inner Himalayas, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Arabia and parts of Turkey, are recorded in his *Life-Stories*. He, the Guru, himself, recorded his own revelations, as did his successors, which add up to the Sikh scripture. This scripture is now deemed the only and final guide of the community, and in all Sikhs temples the scripture occupies a focal point of Sikh congregations, placed upon a high altar and revered. The worship of the Sikhs mainly consists of reading, exposition, and singing of the hymns in praise of God as recorded in the scripture.

During the missionary journeys, which are recorded as four journeys, *udasis*, or odysseys, into the four directions of the globe, Guru Nanak laid down and demonstrated the true application of basic Sikh doctrines on which the Sikh society was to be based. It was during his journey to the Inner Himalayas on the mountain of legendary *Kailash* near the celestial lake of *Mansrover*, that he explained the first priority principle on which the Sikh society was to be based. This was his third journey. It was a long journey and it was to culminate high up in the *Kailash* mountain, the home of Yogis and Hindu gods. He travelled deep into the inner

Himalayas, crossing Nepal and some portions of the Western Tibet, reaching his destination, the holy lake and mountain summit, both of, which places now, unfortunately, are under the occupation of Communist China and our pilgrims cannot go there, where they have been going and visiting for thousands of years past. It is here that he made a most explicit statement of his doctrine that truth must be the basis of all religions, and further, that the religion must be socially committed. Bhai Gurdas, a very learned man of Sikhism—sometimes he is described as the St. Paul of Sikhism—tells us that when the Yogis residing in these inaccessible regions asked Guru Nanak as to "how did the new go in the world of the mortals"—*Mat lok main kia vartara*—the reply of the Guru was sharp and to the point: "The society has become rotten to its core." And here he raised an accusing finger at these Yogis, adding: "And Sires, you are the guilty ones, for, society cannot be guided and sustained without men of high sensitivity and culture, but you, who possess it, have become escapees." *Sach chandarma kud andhiara; siddh, chhap baithe parbatin kaun jagat kau par utara.*

In this doctrine, he answers the question of questions, the question which has been, for thousands of years, worrying the sensitive and thinking man and which question still remains finally unanswered. This question of question is as to whether the carriers of the grace, the liberated men, the men who have achieved the highest apex of spiritual evolution whether they should rise like lions or die like lambs; whether spiritual elite should withdraw into wilderness to bear witness or act as leaven to the lump. Guru Nanak's answer is clear: it is that every fully liberated person must be socially and politically committed, and must return back to the society to serve and guide it, to elevate it, and to preserve its basic ethical and spiritual values.

The next doctrine of Sikh society was demonstrated by Guru Nanak when he visited Mecca, the holy sanctuary of Islam. The story is well-known to almost all who have any acquaintance with Sikhism. This happened during the fourth sojourn of Guru Nanak, when he went to the west, to which direction he travelled by sea, to visit Mecca along with the Muslim pilgrims of India. Inside this holy sanctuary, when doubts arose on account of his behaviour as to whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu, he was accosted with the question: "Who are you, and what is the book that you carry under your arm, for it is not the holy Koran? Tell us, please, according to this book that you carry, whether the Muslim religion is true or the Hindu religion." *"Puchhan khohl kitab nu hindu vada ki mussalmano."*

The reply of the Guru is not only clear but fearless, particularly when you keep in view the situation in which this reply was made. The Guru said:

"Oh, pilgrims, neither those who profess Islam nor those who profess Hinduism are superior, one to the other. It is the practice and its moral

quality that makes one individual superior to the other in the eyes of God, and not mere lip profession. *Baba akkhe hajia subh amlan bahjon dovain roi.*"

Likewise, the third doctrine was demonstrated by his 'exclamations' against the tyranny involved in the invasion of India by Babur, the Mughal, in the year 1521 A.D. He heard of this invasion while he was still in Central Asia, and, it would seem, that he hurriedly returned to India through Hussan Abdal which is now the Sikh shrine of *Panja Sahib*. Guru Nanak's composition popularly known as *Babar-bani*, gives the proper reaction of a cultured, socially committed man towards situations of this kind where a strong and powerful tyrant tramples over the rights and lives of those who have got neither the means nor the power to defend themselves, and nor is there anybody else to defend them. The heartrending cry and audacious question of Guru Nanak put to God in the *Babar-bani* on witnessing the misery caused by Babur's brutalities to undefended and unarmed civilians of India, "just as a herd of meek cows is attacked by a bloodthirsty tiger", as Guru Nanak puts it: *Sakta seeh Maare Pe vagge*. There is clearly the seed of his new concept of individual, personal and human responsibility of man to be directly concerned with evil on this earth, and to resist it instead of either remaining unconcerned and high and dry about it or hoping for extra-terrestrial intervention to destroy it. Guru Nanak has said in the revelation called, *Babar bani*: "So much misery and so much anguish caused to the people and their lamentations, you, O, God saw and heard all of them and yet you were neither moved nor did you intervene." This is the harsh cry and the question of Guru Nanak in relation to a situation of this kind, implicating that under such circumstances it becomes the duty of an enlightened and spiritually committed person to come forward and to organize with those who are similarly cultured, to resist evil—resist evil at all stages, resist in the hope and in the faith that God will give success, but never to sit in the corner, or on the fence, feeling that it is none of my concern or saying that it is the concern of God alone, whose duty it is to send somebody to stop this evil. The implication is clear: God helps those who help themselves. This distinguishes the society that Guru Nanak founded, from most of the previous societies that have existed in the East, or elsewhere.

These doctrines which Guru Nanak had thus enunciated, were, by the successor-Gurus, demonstrated in relation to individual and contingent situations, were applied to the practical task of setting up a new society, the Sikh society, and the last of the Sikh prophets, the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, ordained an Order of the Sikh elites, the Khalsa who now represent and spearhead the tasks of Sikh religion, and are recognisable throughout the world as bearded and turbaned Sikhs. As it is, Guru Nanak, the first Nanak, had already declared that such elite must organize to leaven and elevate society, using 'organisation', *sangat*, and the idea, *sabad*, *gurbani* as the

only legitimate levers available to man for this uplifting. Then the perfected yogins in the *Kailash* Mountains asked Guru Nanak specifically as to how does he propose to eradicate evil and to oppose the tyrant, because no individual has the power to eradicate evil it being universal and inherent, and no unarmed citizen or group of them has the capacity to oppose and halt the tyranny of a person who has power of well organised arms at his command, that is, controls the state, and who is bent upon running amuck over the society. And these perfected yogins asked Guru Nanak, "Do you possess some miraculous, supernatural powers by which you can cure these two rootal maladies of the society? If you have not, as a mere human being you are utterly helpless. If you have any such powers, any other means by which you think that the elites and the cultured people can halt the progress of evil, then please tell us." The reply of Guru Nanak to these queries of the yogins is recorded. The Guru said, "I possess no such miraculous powers as you refer to. I have no extra-physical potency to do what an average, cultured man cannot do, but I am convinced that man, provided he is properly cultured, properly committed, and takes a serious view of life, a man, a human being with all his failings and with all his imperfections, is capable not only of halting the progress of evil, but sometimes stopping and eradicating the evil. And the levers which he can use, or which I propose and advise for use in the society which I want to found in the world, are two." The Guru is recorded as having said, "I want to use two levers: human organization of those seriously committed to the task of defending goodness and to the task of opposing evil; and I want to use a second lever, of the authentic and true 'idea' of religion which is revealed in the conscience of highly sensitive and cultured man. The 'idea' and the 'organisation', which are both human, with these two levers. I hope to be able not only to resist the evil, not only to halt the progress of evil in the society, but to elevate and exalt society to heights yet undreamt of, '*Jin manas te devate kie.*' Through this society I hope to evolve deified men on this earth, who will be God like, God-united, and yet human."

Such are the basic social and spiritual principles of Sikhism as enunciated by its founder and as perfected by his nine successors, and as apotheosized by the last Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, into the Order of the *Khalsa*, who now have the responsibility and the assignment of setting out these directives of Guru Nanak into practice, and who now bear the heavy burden of this responsibility of establishing a world society in which the growth and unchecked march of evil is stopped and the evil is ultimately, if not eradicated, controlled and contained. Such a high task it is that lies on the shoulders of those whom you sometimes see in various parts of the world wearing turbans and unshorn hair. These turbans and unshorn hair are not symptomatic of some kind of lack of modern cultural viewpoint. They are exteriorisation of a psyche and of a sense of such high mission the like of which the history of the world does not know, that which has not ever been conceived or practised before.

After the passing of Guru Gobind Singh and after the ordination of the *Khalsa* since the beginning of the eighteenth century when Guru Gobind Singh passed away, the Sikhs have played, by no means an insignificant part, in the history of Asia and, indirectly, the history of the world. In 1711 they set up a republic in the heartland of the Mogul Empire in India, wherein they gave the land to the tillers in a feudal society, proclaimed that power emanated from and justly belonged to the people and not to a hereditary *privilegentsia*. These remarkable and most modern principles, which were not only avowed but which were put into practice, although for a very short while, are historical phenomena with which not many people in the West or even the East are acquainted, but which, if properly understood and appreciated, would make men marvel as to how it was that in a conservative, in a tranquil and progress-and-struggle-avoiding East such revolutionary and remarkable dynamic ideas could not only spring but could be put into practice and could be applied to actual polity of a state which was founded, but which unfortunately, did not last. This state of the Sikhs lasted only for six or seven years. Emperor Bahadur Shah marched with all the resources of the Mogul Empire from Deccan, the distant south, to destroy this republic in the north of India, which extended from confines of Ludhiana to the outskirts of Panipat, the rivers *Ravi* to *Jamuna*. It was posited in the heart of the north of India, and if it had endured, or had it been possible to make it endure for another forty to fifty years, not only the Mogul Empire would have fallen much earlier than it did, but in India itself such a social and political revolution would have been brought about that it would have been India which might have been the forerunner of the modern ideas of equality, liberty and brotherhood which we now credit to the French Revolution, and which now have inspired and enthused modern political activity during the last one century.

There was yet another principle which the Sikhs, inspired as they were by the teachings of the Gurus, proclaimed and actually applied in this short-lived republic. It was on the 10th of December, 1710 that an Imperial Ordinance was issued from Delhi by the Mogul Emperor, Bahadur Shah, which runs to the effect that: *Nanak prastan ra harkuja kih biyaband ba qatal rasanand*. "Every Sikh, wherever he is found, wherever he is seen, should be put to death without any hesitation and without any further thought." This was the solution which the Mogul Empire in India had conceived of, to solve what they might have described as, 'the Sikh problem' and is even a fiercer and a more frightful notion than the one which entered the head of Hitler during the Second World War, when he wanted to accomplish, what he euphemistically called, 'the solution of the Jewish problem', by exterminating every living Jew wherever he could be found and apprehended. This Ordinance was issued on the 10th of December, 1710, and it was against those people who were small in numbers but were the bearers of the principles of a new society, for the purpose of setting up a modern polity for the guidance of world society in the future centuries to

come. Their reaction to this imperial edict of totalitarian and utmost barbarism is worth noting.

As I have already pointed out, on the 10th of December, 1710, the royal Ordinance of ruthless destruction of all Sikhs, was issued and on 7th April, 1711, hardly three months and a few days afterwards, an Ordinance in reply was issued by the Sikh Republic under the seal of the state and sign manual of their chief executive, Banda Singh Bahadur, which said, which proclaimed: "We do not oppose Muslims or Islam, but only tyranny and usurpation of power." The substance of this Ordinance of the Sikh Republic is recorded in contemporary documents, such as *Perisan Ruquati-Aminuldavallah*, *Dastaralinsha*, and *the Imperial Daily Diaries*, the day to day records made by Authority of what passed in the royal court. They are no available for everybody to see that hardly three months after this drastic Ordinance which was issued for the utter destruction of the Sikh people, the Sikhs had the political maturity and the greatness of heart to reply by issuing an Ordinance which said, "We do not oppose Muslims and we do not oppose the usurpation of political power which belongs to the people and not to privileged individuals or to Moghuls." This outlook, this temper, this sentiment, is so democratic, of such high cultural calibre and such exalted ethics, that it would not be easy—you may search the pages of the contemporary history of those days, of seventeenth and eighteenth and nineteenth century history—you will not come across its equal or its parallel in the political policies and practices of a state anywhere in the world of those days.

After that, ladies and gentlemen, when this initial effort of establishing a Sikh republic in the heart of northern India failed, in which republic the Sikhs tried to apply the high principles of ethics and politics enunciated by the Sikh Gurus, there comes a period of about half a century of relentless persecution and genocide pogroms against the Sikh people by two contending empires, the mightiest empires of Asia of those days, the Moghul and the Pathan Empire. The Pathan Empire persecuted and tried to uproot the Sikhs and to destroy them, root and branch, under the leadership of Ahmed Shah Abdali one of the greatest generals, of the stature of Chenghiz Khan, Halaku and Nadir, the greatest generals which Asia has produced. Under his might and under his generalship, and that of his successors, for almost fifty years, the Pathans as well as the Mughals tried their worst and tried their utmost to cow down the Sikhs, to finish the Sikhs and make them submit. But the Sikhs, withstood his terrible onslaught. They neither submitted nor abandoned their harsh cry of 'death or liberty', a sentiment foreign to and unknown in the Eastern societies, ancient or modern. This is a sentiment which is unique in the history of Asia, though in Europe you do find traces of it. But for fifty years, under the most callous and under the most terrible persecutions, where the aim was complete genocide, the Sikhs not only refused to submit but refused to abandon their cry. "We want death or liberty! We want death or liberty!" And in the end they had their liberty. Sikh supermacy was

then established and then it slid into the form of the Sikh Empire, which was called the *Sarkar Khalsa*, that is, 'the people's Commonwealth', from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Sikh hegemony then extended from the Jamuna River the heartland of India, to the modern frontiers of Afghanistan, and from Indus up to the Little Tibet, the confines of China. Here, what is most noteworthy is that when the Sikh Commonwealth was undergoing the throes of death by the treacherous British and by the treacherous non-Sikh generals of the Sikh army and by the perfidious non-Sikh civil government at Lahore, the Sikhs made fresh conquests into the regions of north Himalayas, conquering and annexing that territory, which has now again been occupied by China, and the Little Tibet. What is of crucial interest in this story is not so much the conquest and the annexation of these most difficult regions at a time when the Sikhs were themselves fighting for their very life, being attacked from the front as well as from the rear, but what is most remarkable about this incident is the Treaty of 1842, by which these areas were annexed to the *Sarkar Khalsa*, to the Sikh Empire. This treaty is now preserved in the archives of the Government of India at Delhi, and anybody who is so inclined may go and have a look at it. This treaty is between two parties; on one side is mentioned the Emperor of China and the Dalai Lama of Tibet—that is one party in this treaty, and the other party is described as, *Khalsajio*, the Honourable Khalsa, as representing the people's sovereignty. This idea in itself is so novel and sounds so modern that it would be impossible to find its similitude and its parallel, in those days even in the West. In the West, these ideas, at that time, were filtering into the minds of the people, but they had not yet been put to practical demonstration in relation to a political policy and as operative ideas; people sitting in chairs, people writing pamphlets and people calling themselves revolutionaries—they were considering these ideas and their minds were being stirred by these ideas, and later on these ideas did become of practical importance in the political, impulses of the West. But in the West, as yet, these ideas had not been put into concrete political shape, as they had been put by the Sikhs in the year 1842. This high level of evolution of political awareness and instinct was not a common phenomenon.

It was in the middle of the nineteenth century that the British perfidiously attacked the Sikh Commonwealth, after corrupting and buying the Hindu Generals of the Sikh army and the Hindu dominated civil government at Lahore, and during the fierce Anglo-Sikh wars and battles, the Sikhs, as a historian says, "beat the British and their Hindu mercenaries to their knees every time." I am quoting. But the Sikh country was, nevertheless, annexed to the British Empire through treachery at the diplomatic table, into details of which I need not go here.

Now I come to the years before 1947. Before the First World War when the ideas of freeing India from the foreign yoke started stirring the minds of the Indian people,

Sikhs were the spearhead of this movement. It was from this place, Vancouver, that as far back as the year 1913 a batch of about two hundred Sikhs in all—there were two or three non-Sikhs, the rest of them all were Sikhs, simple, manual labourers and peasants but genuine Sikhs, whose faith in the Guru and the teachings of the Guru was firm and unsullied—these Sikhs sailed from Vancouver with a plan to topple down the British Empire through mutinous activities in the Indian army. They failed. Most of them were arrested; they were hanged. Many of them were sent to the terrible Andaman island, and they spent their lives there, twenty years, twenty-five-years; died there under conditions of imprisonment which you cannot even imagine these days. Such hardships and such terrible conditions of existence they bore, and not a case of a single Sikh is known who offered them to just say one word. "We are sorry for what we have done" and they could come back to their villages and to their lands and live a life of comfort and ease as their other compatriots were doing (Applause). It is recorded in the official records that whenever these Sikhs were taken to the execution room to be hanged some of you perhaps know how people are hanged, I know it. I have supervised some hangings as they used to be done during the British period. You put opportunity to bathe his body, and then you tie his hands behind him, and then you walk him to the gallows or execution room. You make him stand under the gallows and put the rope around his neck, and then a question is put to him: "Is there anything you want to say as a last word?" First of all: "Answer, are you so-and-so?" He says, "Yes, I am so-and-so." "Well, you are going to be hanged for such-and-such a crime, and now We are going to pull the lever and the rope will kill you, suffocate you to death. Is there anything you want to say before your end comes?" This is the question that is usually put, and its answer is recorded. But to these Sikhs another question was frequently put: "Are you now prepared to say, "I am sorry for what I have done, and the noose will be taken off your neck and you will be set free?" Each one of them, without an exception, is recorded as saying, "No, I am not sorry for what I have done, and when I take my next birth I will do the same. I want the British to leave and free India." (Applause) And then the question would be put, "Now, so and so what are the last words you want to say before your life on this earth comes to an end?" In each case I wouldn't vouchsafe for that but I have seen some of the files. May be in one or two cases, very few cases not, but generally, they sang the following song: *Raj karega khalsa, aki rahe na koi, khwar hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe. Dilli takhat par bahegi ap Guru ki phauj, raj karega khalsa badi hoigi mauj.* (Applause) The people shall rule and no individual shall usurp their sovereignty. The destiny of India shall be shaped by the Khalsa and an era of ever-growing affluence and peace shall dawn for mankind. These are the last words they usually uttered and they are recorded.

There is another incident recorded in the *Memoirs* (Punjabi) of Bhai Randhir Singh, who spent about, I think, twenty years in British jails. He also belonged to this

group, the Mutineers, ghadaries, as they were called. It happened in one jail in the Madras Presidency in the South of India. I have forgotten the name of the jail, into which about a dozen Sikhs had been brought from the Andamans, and these were the Sikhs about whom the authorities thought they had suffered enough. They were young men, thirty, forty years old when they went to jail, and now they were sixty, seventy; their lives spent under unspeakable horrors and tortures in these hell-houses. They were brought to this jail in the Madras Presidency, as I have already said, and then a Sikh of the Government Secret Police went there in civilian clothes. Previous instruction had come that these five or six, who were known as the most staunch antagonists of the foreign occupation of India, and about whom it was known that their ideological maturity was of a high order. Instructions were given previously that they should be accorded slightly better treatment, given better food, less hard labour, to soften them, to mollify them a little. And then one day, three or four days after, this Sikh—his name is, perhaps, also given, he was some high official, he came there and he said, 'I have come from Punjab. I belong to such-and-such village. Most of you know my people, and you, so-and-so, you, my uncle, are related to me by kinship—you, this, that he tried to be friendly and tried to reassure them of his good intentions. And he continued, 'I have been specifically sent here by the British Indian Government and my purpose in coming here is as follows, "You did something. The government now realizes that you did it out of conviction. The government does not think that you are ordinary criminals. On the contrary, the government thinks that you are men of character and of high patriotism, and have by now, paid the price of your convictions. The government, after all, is not an inhuman government. It is a human government. Now they propose to open up some areas for colonization. There they also want to allot pieces of land to the villages from which you come, and the government thinks that it would be unfair, not fitting to the sense of fairness of the British, to deprive you people of that to which you are entitled as residents of your villages. Your kinsmen in your villages from which you come have been given plots of land, and the government wants you also to have such plots of land. They don't want you to apologize. We know you will not apologize because you are men of stubborn convictions. All that we want is that when we free you—We will free you and we will also give you free grants of land, and you go and cultivate those lands, but from now onwards, when these lands are given to you and you start farming those lands, you just give us a gentleman's word—no formal apology, nothing of the sort—a gentleman's assurance that you will not participate in any activity which is anti-government.

They all kept quite; nobody spoke. And then he said, "Is there any of you who wants his name to be communicated to the British Indian Government for the allotment of these free grants of land?" All of them simultaneously said, "No." And then there was a European officer who during all these proceedings was sitting silent. He said, "Those of you who want to oppose the British Government till their last

breath on this earth, please step one step forward." All those six, or so people stepped one step forward. (Applause)

Such was the society which the principles of Sikhism gave birth to, and such is the history and tribulations of this society which, though on the material plane may seem to have failed to make a conspicuous mark, but which, on the plane of principles and on the plane of essences has made such a remarkable imprint, a superior to which would be difficult to find in the histories of the societies of the world, from ancient times to the modern times. •

When in 1947 the British—in 1946 or even earlier, the British gave it out that they no longer wanted to hold India and it was also known that the British would now quit, and they wanted to hand over the sovereignty and the political power of India to the Indians themselves, then the question arose, how and to whom should this political power be transferred. I will not go into details, because there is neither time nor would it be pertinent on this occasion in the short time we have at our disposal to go into these details. But the broad outlines are that the British Parliament, who were penultimate authority in this matter of the transfer of power, declared unequivocally that after the British quit India, there are three peoples, distinct peoples, who are the legitimate heirs to the sovereignty of India, and whatever these three peoples of three 'nations' agree to amongst themselves, their decision the British will accept before they quit India, though they tendered it as their own advice that it was the wish of the British people that they should leave India united and intact, and it should not be divided into bits. That would be a tragedy for India, a setback, they felt, to what they had accomplished while they occupied India, and it would also be not in the interests of the international political situation. On all these grounds the British advised, vehemently and consistently advised, that India should remain one and united and that these three, the only legitimate heirs to the sovereignty of India, should come to some kind of mutual agreement, so that the sovereignty of India, the political power of the State of India, can be transferred peacefully, so that India may remain one and united. It is at this period that offers were made, either for keeping India intact and one, or for dividing it into three parts. I am only talking here about the case of the Sikhs. I will leave out the Muslims, they have achieved their Pakistan as they wanted it. Under what circumstances they wanted it, who forced them to, whether they were badly advised or just obliged are questions which are of no practical interest now. What has happened and cannot be easily undone. But about the Sikhs, definite, concrete and pressing offers were made half a dozen times by the Muslim League, as well as by the British, to the Sikhs to carve out and to have an area for themselves in which they can also be a free people, not altogether unlike the Hindus and Muslims are going to be. There is no doubt about it, because I am a personal witness to some of these occasions and there is such heavy and credible documentary evidence on the point that it cannot be doubted or denied. But on each and every occasion, totally

trusting the commitments which the Hindu leaders of the Indian Congress had made to the Sikhs, the Sikhs always spurned these offers. Whenever the British made these offers, the Sikhs said, "No, we tie our destiny irrevocably to the destiny of India because India is our holy land and our Fatherland and the type of society which Guru Gobind Singh wanted to found and the type of world-society which the *Khalsa* wants to spearhead can more easily and more firmly be established, to begin with, on the soil of India, because India is likely to be more readily recipient of those ideas than most of the rest of the world. Therefore, our destiny lies with India and not outside it. The promises and commitments which the Hindu leaders made to the Sikhs were as follows: that after the British quit and the Sikhs have refused to accept the offers of separate, sovereign or semi-sovereign areas for themselves made by others, after that happens, the Hindu majority—the Indian Congress, the mouthpiece of the Hindus as they rightly regarded themselves—the Hindu majority community solemnly promised, first, that they will not promulgate any constitution for the future government of India which does not have the free concurrence and assent of the Sikhs; two, that an area in the north of India, with an autonomous status shall be carved out in which, in the flowery words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "the Sikhs also might feel the glow of freedom." Which means, 'therein the Sikhs shall be able to act effectively at the decision-making levels of their state'. These promises were given from the year 1930 onwards up to the year 1947 those promises were repeatedly spelt out, and they were repeated by individual leaders and by the formal resolutions of the All India Congress again and again, again and again, including, by Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, and all these people, that, whatever else may come to pass, so far as the Sikhs are concerned the Hindu community and the Hindu people stand irrevocably committed to this promise, which, Jawaharlal Nehru said, while introducing the basic resolution in the Constituent Assembly, in 1950, has the status of a 'religious vow', the promises being, one, no Constitution in India shall be framed to which Sikhs do not give their free, unfettered assent, two, in the north of India an innovations. Islamic society is grounded in totalitarianism of religious formulae and social laws, enforceable by political sovereignty and over lordship over non-muslim societies.

Christendom and Christianity formed a political society of medieval ages and are an oecumenical, universal religion of Gentiles, without being a political society in the modern world.

The Jewish society is basically and fiercely ethnical while Buddhism is fundamentally non-social and non-political.

Sikhism is a social religion, non-ethnical, oecumenical grounded in a political society, directed and committed to propagation and establishing of a plural world-society, tolerant, open, progressive and free in character.

Thus, Sikhism and the Sikhs form a unique religion and a unique society, which

and who can be clearly distinguished from the other religious and political societies of the world.

Arnold Toynbee, the world-famous historian and philosopher of History, in his *magnus opus*, 'History', refers to Sikhism as the forerunner of the true *elan* of the Communist Party of Lenin. Arnold Toynbee adds that Lenin was quite mistaken in claiming that his Communist Party was a unique party in the history of the world and had been formed for the first time. Arnold Toynbee asserts that because of its *elan* and structure, the *Khalsa* of the Sikh society is true forerunner and prototype of the Communist Party of Lenin.

Sikhism and its apotheosis, the *Khalsa*, have merely a *structural* affinity and kinship of *elan* with the Communist Party of Lenin in so far as it is essential an organisation of committed elites for furthering the cause of social transformations, but in aims and content it is poles apart from communism, as it is irrevocably committed to social pluralism and freedom of conscience, tolerance, and recognition of the human individual as an end in himself, and not an expendable limb in the beehive society of communism. This aspect of the matter, Arnold Toynbee has failed to appreciate and point out in his great book.

Above all, Sikhism is irrevocably committed to the doctrine of the existence of God, the one Almighty God, as the beginning and the end of all, that is and that shall be, *alawwal walakhir*, as the Koran puts it.

Sikhs are an international community, about ten millions in numbers, mainly concentrated in the north-west of India, but found in most continents and countries of the globe: in India, Malaysia, Africa, Europe, South and North Americas including Canada, Vancouver being their first settlement in North America. There is a quip, current in European as well as in Asiatic countries to the effect that wherever life exists and is sustainable on earth, the potato and the Sikhs are bound to reach there sooner or later.

Arnold Toynbee, in his latest, one of the latest books—not the latest, 'East to West', has observed to the effect that if the human race survives its follies at all—he is doubtful that it will survive—but he says that if it survives its follies at all, Sikhs shall surely be there as a vigorous, hardy and go-getting *homo-sapiens* on this planet.

Sikhs are universally admitted as excelling most other races of mankind in the basic activities of man: production of food, manipulation of tools and fighting. As agriculturalists, artisans and manual labourers they excel many other races and human groups and as soldiers they are inferior to no group in the history of the world, in bravery inspired by ethical considerations.

This religion of Sikhism was founded, as we know, by Guru Nanak, who was born in the year 1469 A.D. Guru, in Sikh terminology, means, a prophet and a world-teacher, and Sikhism is a prophetic religion based on definitive revelation, like semitic religions of the west, and it, therefore, can be clearly constra distinguished

from the eastern religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, which have an anonymous mysticism as their source of validity. In this sense, understood this way, Guru Nanak is the first prophet born in India, as one who claims that the religion he preaches is a revealed therefore, conclude, and try to sum-up in few propositions that what I have been trying to convey here. .

- (1) Sikhism is not a Hindu sect but a prophetic religion and a unique political society, guided and led by an Order of the elite Sikhs, the *Khalsa*, whose unshorn hair and turbans are merely an exteriorisation of their religious psyche, natural, spontaneous, evolutionary and authentic. This is the first proposition which I have tried to elucidate before you.
- (2) The second proposition which I have tried to make out before you is that Sikhism enjoins a religion grounded in truth alone, a growing truth in the enlightened conscience of man and sternly translated into day-to-day living of individuals.
- (3) The third proposition which I have tried to put before you, to demonstrate before you, is that the Sikhs are committed to help establishment of a world-society which is plural, non coercive, expansive and forward-looking motivated Godwards, in which there is maximum toleration, ever-growing affluence and minimum of mutually destructive ambition. And on the basis of this, I want to observe in the form of the fourth proposition that:
- (4) The mosaic-pattern of Canadian society comes nearest to the Sikh ideal of a world-society, though the Canadian society is not, in every respect and in essence, its replica or prototype.
- (5) And the last proposition which I now formulate in precise words is that, while, as Canadian citizens, the Sikhs may look forward to a hopeful and bright future, in India, their historical homeland, they now face the basic problem of their identity and existence, since the control of their own history has been snatched out of their hands and their historical potential has been submerged and throttled.
- (6) And I add, that the Sikhs want to live, as all living things do: they do not want to die.

Thank you (Applause)



SIKHISM AND POLITICS

In the June, 1971 issue of *The Sikh Review* appeared an article by a writer who prefers to remain anonymous, under the caption, "Sikhism, Its Outer and Inner Aspects."

The main thesis he would establish is that Sikhism goes ill with political activity, that its spirit is opposed to a striving for positions of political power at decision-making levels and that the Sikh ideal, as embodied in *Guru Granth Sahib* is hostile to any political power and status for the Sikhs as such.

This is his main thesis, but he has also taken liberties to cast doubts at the bonafides and sanity of those who have led the Sikh struggle during the last 34 years, for the establishment of some respectable political status for the Sikh people in a free India. He argues against the Punjabi Unilingual State by trying to show that in it the political power led to dispersion of the Sikh society into caste and clan and devolution of Punjabi as the official language.

That may well be the case though the argument that the malady is the desire for political power and not improper exercise thereof might be questioned. Further on, however, the writer permits himself to indulge in insinuatory and contemptuous attitude towards all such politicians who plead for a respectable constitutional status for the Sikh people in a free India. He says, "As though the experience of the Punjabi Suba was not enough, now there is a demand for a 'Sikh homeland', *within the Indian Union* !"

Firstly, he puts the word 'homeland' within inverted commas and secondly, he puts the word 'within the Indian Union' in italics, and thirdly he places an exclamation mark at the end. What he intends to convey is clear and may be paraphrased as follows:

"The word 'Homeland' (devalued by him as 'homeland') is a crude if not exactly a meaningless political term. The demand for the Sikh Homeland 'within the Union of India' is silly and self-contradictory and conceived by politically immature and stupid politicians. The sign of exclamation at the end means that, the Sikhs who demand the Sikh Homeland properly belong to some place where their physical movements are kept under strict professional control and where they can receive proper medical attention to cure their minds of feebleness and derangement."

It is not for the first time that a self-confident and self-assured Sikh has intruded into the printed page to condemn all desire and urge for a political status for the Sikhs,

and against any demand for such constitutional status and territorial adjustments wherein the Sikh interests can survive and develop without hindrances and hurdles that are implicit in the current political trends and the constitution Act of India.

Not long ago a well-placed and highly educated Sikh, an affluent barrister-at-law, a citizen of the United Kingdom, cracked-down in the columns of *The Sikh Courier*, of U. K. on an English lady professor in the London University for having stated that the natural destiny of the Sikh people in India was to have some kind of autonomous status in the north of India. This Sikh barrister-at-law argued that the litany, *raj karega Khalsa*, which is believed to have been uttered by Guru Gobind Singh himself, and which has been and is repeated by Sikhs throughout the world, at the end of every congregational prayer ever since 1710 A. D. does not mean that the Sikh people must struggle for political autonomy for themselves in their Homeland, but that the litany itself simply means that at some point of history, the Sikh people shall acquire a sovereign status. This Sikh legal luminary then pointed out that this prophecy of the Guru had already been fulfilled as the Sikhs did acquire and enjoy a sovereign status during the first half of the 19th century in the north-west of India. He went on to argue that, now to dream for another spell of political autonomy for the Sikhs was, in some way, to show a form of mental imbecility such as might lead to disastrous consequences for Sikhism and the Sikh people, both.

The writer of these lines then pointed it out that the litany '*raj karega Khalsa*', does not mean that the Sikh people shall enjoy an autonomous political status once upon a time and never again and that anybody who understands simple Punjabi syntax should be able to appreciate the point.

Some time ago, an esteemed gentleman, Santokh Singh has written and published a paper-back, *Gursikhi ate Rajniti*, of 16 pages in which he has extensively quoted from *Guru Granth Sahib* to establish his cherished thesis that politics is forbidden to a Sikh and that the sole religious and social duty of a Sikh is to repeat the Name of God, to join his hands in supplication and submission before his neighbours and adversaries and to earn his livelihood as best as he can, within these limitations. On the title page of this paper-back is a drawn picture of two soft, well manicured and white-sleeved male hands joined in supplication, in prayer to God as well as a gesture of submission to his non-Sikh neighbours. This paper-back has been widely circulated through post to the addresses of all such Sikhs who are deemed as guilty of preaching that the Sikh people must be accorded a distinct autonomous status in a free India such as can guarantee the Sikhs, free development as citizens of India. There can be no mistake about either the enthusiasm and aims of Sardar Santokh Singh of Chandigarh or about the amplitude of his material resources which he seems to be eager to press into the service of what he believes to be the cause of true Sikhism.

There is another untiring Sikh writer of New Delhi, who has written extensively articles and books to establish that in the light of the Doctrines of Psychoanalysis,

political power and exercise thereof are fatal to the proper integration of human personality and that the teachings of the Sikh Gurus are, when properly interpreted by Psychoanalysts, in accordance with the insights of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

How interesting it would be if some competent psychoanalyst undertakes to cross-examine a cross-section of these theorists of complete renunciation of Political power by the Sikhs by relaxing them on a clinical couch, under proper hypnotic trance to find out what precise complexes are at the root of such literary effusions peculiar only to Sikh writers and intellectuals, the symptoms of which complexes hardly, if ever, exhibit themselves in the case of Hindus and Muslims and other classes of citizens of India. Hindus, one can understand, need not go into such speculative exercises as to whether it is more desirable to be one's own master or to be a slave. They already have their grip firmly on the levers of political power in India while Muslims are too well-entrenched in their firm attitudes towards this question of political power. But the other groups and communities of India who are never known, in history, to have aspired for participation in political power, the *sudras*, the untouchables, the so-called *harijans*, the *Nagas*, *adivasis*, the *Kabir-panthis*, the *Dadu-panthis* and a host of others never burst out into print to cry out that political power or participation therein was a sin or a poison and that it constitutes the greatest danger to their purity of existence if any of their class ever would aspire to it. But the Sikhs do it, again and again, and sturdily and persistently. This is a most intriguing and amazing phenomenon of current Indian scene which, perhaps some competent psychoanalyst can explain. We, who have the misfortune to have known politics from inside know the answer but prefer not to spell it out. Let us, however, briefly examine three broad questions, which disturb these Sikh intellectuals again and again.

Is aspiration for political power and desire to participate in its exercise alien to Sikh doctrines, opposed to the spirit of the evolutionary movement of Sikh people? Again, is it misconceived or unprofitable to ask for some kind of autonomous State for the Sikh people within a free India? Lastly, is the demand for Sikh Homeland within the Union of India stupid and impracticable politics? Let the last question be gone into first.

The demand for the Sikh Homeland is formally enshrined in the basic Resolution passed at the All India Annual Akali Conference held at Ludhiana in the temporary town called, *Ranjit Nagar*, in December, 1966.

This demand has three ingredients : firstly, it says that a specified area in which would be included the present Punjab, the Ganganagar District, of Rajasthan, the Sirsa area of Hisar District, Shahabad and Guhla areas of Karnal District, Kalka and Pinjore, the Ambala Sadar area, *desh* area of Nalagarh, and Dalhousie etc. should be formed into a single unilingual Punjabi State.

Its second ingredient is that, this State should be accorded the same autonomous status which was given to the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the Constitution Act of India as first put on the Statute Book in 1950.

Lastly, this demand requires that the Constitution Act of India should concede that this State shall be deemed as the Sikh Homeland and that in this state the Sikh interests shall be of special importance.

Now, there is nothing *prima facie* ridiculous in this demand as some clever Sikh intellectuals, without studying the question properly, try to make out again and again. This area does constitute the Sikh Homeland along with certain other areas which have now gone to Pakistan. 'Sikh Homeland' is not a word which has been coined by some armchair and mischievous Sikh politician, but it is an expression which occurs in the writings of Europeans, competent to speak on the affairs of India, and written more than a century ago. It was in the forties of the 19th century that Sir Needham Cust wrote his *Oriental and Linguistic Essays*, a book which has been regarded with respect by those eager to understand Indian affairs and problems. In this book he says that from Jamuna to Jhelum and from Panipat to the foothills of Sivaliks is the area which constitutes the Sikh Homeland. And yet again and again, a special class of Sikh intellectuals, burst into the Press with jokes and contempt, aimed at those associated with the term, 'Sikh Homeland' :

*What frenzy has of late possessed the brain,
Though few can write still fewer can refrain.*

Again, there can be nothing ridiculous or stupid in demandings unilingual State of such areas of this Sikh Homeland which are still left in India i.e. Bharat. Unilingual States are an established feature of our Public Policy and a Sikh politician cannot be made butt of cheap jokes simply because he makes a demand which is in complete conformity with the Public Policy of his country! To ask for an autonomous status for a State Such as was willingly conceded to Jammu and Kashmir by the Constituent Assembly in 1950, surely cannot be construed either as an act of treason or an act of peculiar Sikh stupidity. The only special characteristic of the demand for Sikh Homeland is the requirement that the Constitution of India should concede that in this area the Sikh interests shall be of special importance. If a mere mention of Sikh interests irritates and annoys some Sikh intellectuals, it should be spelt out clearly, because preservation of Sikh interests does not mean destruction of non-Sikh interests such as might violate the strict sense of justice of these highminded people. This constitutional provision would be only directive of policy to be interpreted within the framework of our Constitution Act by the judicial courts of the country in relation to each and every measure that a democratically elected Legislative Assembly of the Sikh Homeland may pass or determine, it is merely to be a guarantee against application or operation of any law, policy or measure that tends to or aims at hitting at the basic Sikh interest, that of freely existing, developing and maturing within the geographical and political context and framework of the Sikh Homeland. It will also legitimize such laws, measures and policies that can be shown to be

positively necessary to preserve Sikh entity. It is a political question as to whether such a safeguard and guarantee may be given to the Sikhs within the constitutional framework of India without impinging upon the legitimate rights of other citizens. It can be demonstrated through argument and dialogue that such a demand is necessary, legitimate and permissible. Surely, on this ground, then, no cheap jokes may be flung at those who uphold this demand for Sikh Homeland.

There is nothing in this demand for Sikh Homeland which is unconstitutional, which is ill-conceived, which is unpatriotic or which is symptomatic of political illiteracy or mental under-development, the type of insinuations which are constantly being flung not only by those who are hostile to the Sikh people as such, but more so by those who consider themselves as self-appointed, special custodians of purity of the Sikh doctrine.

Is Sikhism a Church of worship or a Church of social policy also ? This is the fundamental question. Our Sikh intellectuals insist on arguing that Sikhism is merely a Church of worship and that the social policy and hence participation in political activities and power is none of its concern.

Now, those who have studied not only the evolution of Sikh history carefully but also the documentary material that has been unearthed during the last 20 or 30 years are fully aware that movements of schism, by the followers of Dhirmal, Ram Rai of Harbhagat, the *Niranjanias* of Jandiala, which movements, the Sikh Gurus in their lifetime and the Sikh people subsequently have tried to suppress and extirpate root and branch, through all legitimate means available, were movements which were inspired by the doctrine that either Sikhism should remain unconcerned altogether with social policy and political activity or it should fall in line with the ruling Muslims so as to become their camp-followers. The substitute scripture which the Dhirmalias compiled, more voluminous than the *Guru Granth*, contains a distinct chapter on *Var Piran Paikambran ki*, accepting the Semitic line of Prophets and saints of Islam as legitimate and authoritative and about *Niranjanias*, the author of *Tarikh-i-Hussainshahi* (1798 A.D.) tells us that 'these Sikh strictly follow basic junctions of Islam and are aspirants for entry into Muslim Society.' Ram Rai, as we know, was not even averse to suitable alterations in the text of the *Guru Granth* itself to suit the imperial policies of a theocratic Muslim State. Against these trends the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh people in their historical development have waged relentless struggle and bloody battles and it is precisely this doctrine and these trends which a class of Sikh intellectuals now persist, should be introduced in to the policy of the Sikhs.

Raj Karega Khalsa is not an apocrypha or a fabrication: '*Kachi bani*' as Sardar Santokh Singh of Chandigarh tell us, but it is there in the earliest Sikh records, the *Janam Sakhi* of Guru Nanak by Bhai Bala, in its Appendix, called, *Karninama*. In this Appendix these words are spoken by Guru Nanak himself, the same Guru Nanak, who in the *Guru Granth* proclaims that 'the God he worshipped was a God

who was a destroyer of earthly tyrants', *asur samgharan ram hamara*. This *Raj Karega Khalsa* is then reiterated in the *Rahitnama Bhai Nand Lal*, almost contemporaneous with Guru Gobind Singh, and it is confirmed in the *Suraj Prakash* (1840 A.D.) of Bhai Santokh Singh and *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1830 A. D.) of Rattan Singh Bhangu. Ever since the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, for almost ninety years, the Sikhs struggled and passed through the Valley of Death to emerge into a sovereign nation, implicitly believing that these are the very words from the mouth of the Guru and till 1948 this litany has been faithfully repeated morning and evening, by faithful Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh during all kinds of ups and downs in their political fortunes.

It was 1949, at the bidding of late Sardar Patel, that the Nagoke Congressi Sikhs when they captured the control of the Sikh historical shrines in the Punjab, issued an *ukase* discontinuing chanting of this litany in the *gurdwaras* under official control but this interregnum was very short-lived. This litany continue to be chanted in all free Sikh congregations throughout the world. Notwithstanding the intellectual onslaught, mounted in recent years, against it, for whatever reasons or motives. It was Guru Amar Dass who established 22 dioceses of the Sikh Church, and Bhai Santokh Singh in his *Suraj Parkash* tells us that the twenty two dioceses were established to create exact parallelism between the Sikh Church and the 22 provinces of the Mughal Empire. In the *Bhagat Ratnavali*, Bhai Mani Singh, a contemporary and close disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, in his exegesis of the eleventh Ode of Bhai Gurdas tells us as follows;

"Brothers Jaita, Sigara and Ganga Sehgal were brave and fearless soldiers and they presented themselves before Guru Arjan. Guru Arjan bade them to join the encourage of his son, Hargobind, who was to be the successor Guru and who, Guru Arjan said, had been assigned the task by God Almighty, to protect the Sikh congregation through the employment and power of arms and armaments. Hard times were ahead. The new Guru will make conquests that will lead to eventual political sovereignty of the Sikhs through the sword and will establish the Sikh hegemony of the spiritual world through the power of the divine Word."

When in 1710 the political sovereignty of the Sikh nation was first proclaimed by Banda Singh Bahadur the official State-seal bore the following legend in strict compliance with this exegesis in the *Bhagat Ratnavali* :

"*Sikhe zad bar har du alam tegh-i-Nanak Sahib ast*, which means that the Sikh people stake their claim to the political and spiritual sovereignty, both, such being the original doctrine of Nanak."

The poet Kankán, who was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, tells us that a falcon of emperor Shah Jehan fell into the hands of some Sikh hunters of Guru Hargobind (1595-1664 A. D.), but they refused to surrender it to the minions of the Emperor and made the following utterances :

"You keep on threatening us to return immediately the falcon of the Emperor. We refuse to do so and we would have you know, that what to speak of this falcon, our ultimate objective is to snatch the regal crown from over the head of your Emperor who usurps the sovereignty of the people, *tusin baj hi baj pukarde ho asin taj tuhadara chahunde han.*"

It was Guru Tegh Bahadur, the father of Guru Gobind Singh, who issued the famous *hukamnama* for all-out rebellion against the Mughal Imperial tyranny calling upon the Sikhs, 'not to salute a Mughal government official and never to invite him to sit on the head-side of a cot.'

In obedience to this *hukamnama* of Guru Tegh Bahadur, hundreds of Sikhs in the decades to come, laid down their lives willingly by refusing to salute the men in governmental authority and by declining to make gestures of submission to the rulers. These are the martyrs whom we remember and revere in our every day prayers since the last 200 years. Guru Gobind Singh enjoined upon the Sikhs to insist on wearing unlicensed arms, the *kirpan* which is the right and symbol of a free sovereign man and in the *Prachin Panth Prakash*, it is said of a Sikh that :

*"He does not own allegiance to any earthly lord.
He is either a sovereign man or a rebel."*

Is this an evidence of a Sikh doctrine which lays down that aspiration for political power and political activity as such is alien to Sikhism and hostile to the true spirit of the Sikh people ? Do some of our new intellectuals want us to apostatize to join some new sect of pseudo-Sikhism based on some new doctrine of religion which was neither preached by the Sikh Gurus nor practised by the Sikh people during the last three centuries and more? If that is their intention let them come out openly with it instead of indulging in tendentious propaganda. It is highly improper, if not mean also to try to deviate Sikhs from a position and interpretation of their religion which has received the universal assent of the Sikh Gurus, the Sikh theologians and the Sikh people during the past centuries of Sikh history.

Now, let us come to the point as to whether it is advisable for the Sikhs to demand the type of protection and status embodied in the demand for Sikh Homeland. The argument is frequently advanced that the spirit of the Sikh people urges them on to expand while the demand for Sikh Homeland seeks to shrivel and confine them into a small area in the north of India. This is wholly misconceived. The demand for Sikhs Homeland neither envisages that all the Sikhs of the world should pack up their bags and baggage to come back to settle in the Sikh Homeland nor does it follow that the establishment of the Sikh Homeland will oblige them to do so. The Sikh Homeland shall be an integral part of India and those who have their homes and hearths in the Sikh Homeland shall be as good citizens of India as those residents in other parts of India, entitled to the same rights, privileges and protection to which any non-Sikh

citizen of India is entitled. The establishment of Sikh Homeland will not entail or place any restriction on the urge of Sikhs to move about or reside in any part of the world, just as they may do now. Those who conjure up such objections or fears in the minds of the Sikhs are either ignorant or something worse.

It is urged sometimes by opponents of Sikhs politics that the demand for Sikh Homeland is hostile to the public policy of national integration and that for this reason the demand should be eschewed in the larger national interests. This objection is also wholly misconceived if not mischievous also. Firstly, this national integration, the other face of which is the Jana Sangha slogan, 'Indianization of every Indian citizen', in essence is not what it seems on the surface and it is the job of politicians to find this truth out and to formulate programmes accordingly. National integration has an implicit message of Hindu Primacy conveyed to the minorities in a variety of ways among which the most prominent are, linguistic, historiographic and religious. Linguistically, the minorities are required to accept Sanskrit-based Hindi and *Devnagri* alphabet as the National characteristics of a true progressive Indian Outlook. On the plane of history it demands denigration of historical importance of minorities, based on an emphasis on the central role of Hindus in Indian history. In religion, it demands a favourable treatment, at official level, of the operative ideas and ceremonies of Hinduism. The ultimate intent of national integration, as it is implemented today is the Hinduisation of all minority religious, cultural and ethnical groups in India.

Such an integration is ultimately intended to such back the Sikhs into the omnivorous belly of the Hindu society from which there is no return and if this trend succeeds in its ultimate aims, Sikhism as a distinct religion will become a thing of the past and Sikh society, and the Khalsa shall disintegrate finally. This Hindu polity of universal absorption has hoary sanctions, and in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya or Chanakya, to commemorate whom the Diplomatic Enclave of New Delhi is called, *Chanakypuri*, it is called, *matsyanyaya* the 'Fish-Justice', the moral right of the bigger fish to eat up the smaller one, and the duty of the smaller fish to submit willingly to be gobbled up. This doctrine would fix the Sikh destiny as manure sacrifice and transition.

This would be not only a tragedy for the mankind as a whole, for Sikhism and Sikh society have been accepted as a valuable element of contribution to the world culture, but this would be a tragedy for India and the Hindu society also, a point the present-day myopic politicians of India fail to see.

Back of Sikh society, behind their energy, their historymaking potency, and their productive capacity, there is something as powerful as it is insubstantial; it is a set of ideas, attitudes and convictions and the confidence that these ideas are viable. The Sikhs, if they are driven to the conclusion by the machinations of the present-day rulers of India and by the political stupidity of a class of a Sikh intellectuals, that their collectivity and the ideas and beliefs that have sustained it are no longer viable and relevant to the present situation they will erupt before fading away. They will not

become a part and parcel of the Hindu society as some short-sighted Hindu politicians seem to believe. They will become accretions to anti-social gangs of smugglers, women-lifters, highway men, Naxalites and terrorists, as those who have studied the pulsations of Sikh society in recent times know full well. Then the deposit of Sikhism and the Sikh way of life, the panoply of history-making power will be as nothing and the darkness will gather and the north of India shall fall a prey to dark anti-social forces the ultimate impact of which on the history of India and this region of the world, nobody can foretell. The future develops mysteriously, secretly and unfolds itself silently without fore-caution and there will appear no warning headlines in the morning editions of favourite newspapers of these obstreperous Sikh intellectuals and over-clever rulers of India before such a catastrophe befalls them.

In Guatemala and southern Mexico, one can observe the Indians who are, without doubt, the lineal descendants of those who created the Mayan civilization. Today, they are a humble people not asking much of themselves or of the world and not getting much. They have been reduced to a state of peonage and with this they are content. A light has gone out. In Malaysia of today there are Sikh citizens who are descendants of those who submitted to the cruel and excruciating removal of their scalps by the executioner rather than part with their sacred *keshas*, yet these are the Malaysian young Sikh men who would at a pinch, embrace Islam so as to marry a young Muslim co-ed, since the Constitution of their country does not permit the marriage of a Muslim girl with a non-Muslim citizen. In the streets of Southampton of the United Kingdom you may observe the clean-shaven and cigarette-smoking descendants of those Sikhs who once challenged the might of the growing British Imperial power on the banks of Sutlej and had almost defeated it if only they had not been betrayed by their traitor generals and traitor civil government. The British Empire, the Industrial Revolution of Europe and also the history of world in the 19th and 20th centuries were at crossroads and these Sikhs had the powers of control. Now, their modern descendants of the considerable Sikh colony in the United Kingdom, who have shaved themselves and converted themselves into jolly good fellows in the beer pubs of that great country, might be full of energy that enables them to earn good money and they might have acquired a good material standard of life, good food, smart clothes and habits of generous hospitality and they might build magnificent Sikh temples wherein offerings of thousands of pounds a day are made and in which *gurdwaras* Queen's peace is frequently disturbed on issues of election of presidents and secretaries of these Sikh temples, but these modern 'Sikhs' who have dropped out, so to speak, have lost, forever, the history-making potency that their forefathers possessed and no matter how affluent and influential they became as a group in the United Kingdom, they shall never be able to make any significant contribution to the high and composite culture of the British race. They are doomed to remain 'blackies' and 'niggers' 'south Asians' and 'Hindus' and they shall never be

Sikhs, as conceived by Guru Nanak and as fashioned by Guru Gobind Singh unless they unreservedly and penitently return to the original Institutes of the Khalsa.

The cohesiveness of a society, the determination of a large number of people to live together, to work together, to aspire together, is a fairly mysterious thing and we yet do not know what makes it happen.

If the Khalsa is made to pull apart, as the neo-Hindu politicians through purposeful mechinatons and the naive Sikh intellectuals through cussedness and lack of deeper understanding of things seem bent upon doing, will anyone know how to go about repairing it? Gurus do not descend on the earth every decade. Who can say what the distintegration of the Khalsa will cost the Hindu society and India in the long run !

The demand for Sikh Homeland is a way out of the conditions of rootlessness and individual irresponsibility into which Sikhs are being reduced through atomization of the Khalsa and secularization in a free india, Unless they are extricated from this morass through political arrangements that can enable them to salvage their collective identity they might become a danger to others, in deseparate efforts to find meaning and purpose for themselves, through whatever comes to hand, communism, nihilism, bizarre religions or far-out protest movements. Those who are in intimate touch with the social fermentation in the Indian Punjab of today know too well that this is what is already happening. One has simply to examine the lists of cardholders of the communist party, the bio-data of liquidated Naxalite young men, the leading lights of protest movements and strikes and *hartals* in every sphere of social, political and governmental life of the State, and also the number of those who daily swell the pseudo-religious churches of *nirankaris radhaswamis* and self-styled saints to realize that the hazards are real. Those who shut their eyes to this danger do so either through irrational animosity towards Sikhism and the Sikh people or through crass ignorance. This explains the entire gamut of opposition and objections to the demand for Sikh Homeland. The good souls who argue that because in the Sikh scripture it is stated at numerous places, that a man of religion hankers neither after wordly power nor after personal redemption, *raj na chahun mukt na chahun*, and so on, do not understand that these are not injunctions or commandments of Sikhism nor statements of doctrine, but merely clues to techniques for mood-inducement, the roots of which techniques go to the ancient yoga texts. To interpret a sacred scripture is not a job which every man who happens to be a graduate from a University, a brave General or a successful lawyer can properly undertake. There are different levels of meanings of a scripture and only those who have spent a life-time on the subject, with a proper background and training, are competent to interpret them. Dante in his *Convivio* lists four levels of meanings in accordance with which scriptures ought to be understood and expounded and the modren philosophers of semantics endorse it, in substance. Literal and dictionary meanings constitute the lowest of these levels. Amongst Sikhs, however, an impression seems to be prevalent that not only every

man may interpret the *Guru Granth* and the inner meanings and the true doctrines of Sikhism but that every one's interpretation must be deemed as valid as that of any other. This would seem to be the Sikh variation of 'equality, liberty, fraternity'. This type of immaturity neither exists nor is tolerated in any other religious community of the world and it has never been so permitted in the past by any mature culture group.

Martin Luther wrote indefatigably on a vast variety of subjects and the *Weimer Edition* of his *Complete Works* runs to ninety volumes. Martin Luther is father and fountain head of the trends of religious thought and moods that have given birth to modern industrialized, powerful Western-Europe. He may be said to have summed up his life work and his final view on the subject of religion, in the famous Note found in his scattered papers after his death. This Note, scribbled in pencil on a stray piece of paper, runs as follows :

"No one can understand Virgil's *Bucolics* unless he has been a headmaster for five years; no one can understand the *Letters* to Cicero unless he has lived and moved in a great Commonwealth for 25 years. Let no one think he has tasted enough of the Holy Scriptures unless he has ruled the congregation with prophets like Elijah and Elisha, John the Baptist, Christ and the Apostles. We are beggars, that is true."

To interpret and to exegetise the Sikh scripture and to lay bare, the meaning and true contours of the values of Sikh society is not every man's meat. Those who insist on creating confusion and obfuscation in the doctrines and principles of Sikhism and the postulates of Sikh society are doing the greatest possible harm not only to the Sikhs but also the world-community which is a legitimate heir to what Sikhism and the Sikh society has to offer by way of its peculiar contribution to the universal world-culture, which is now in the process of emerging.

That the Khalsa is a State is the earliest clear idea that has emerged in Sikh epiphany and that has been accepted as the true Sikh postulate for the last three hundred years. This was much before Hegel stated that only those people can come under our notice which form a State. Hegel is correct, because his statement reflects the familiar distinction between History and pre-History: only those people which have succeeded in organizing their society in some degree cease to be primitive savages and enter into History. That sovereignty is a *sui generis* characteristic of the Khalsa, that may be suppressed by other or compromised by community's individuals but which cannot be extinguished or proscribed is equally well established. Protest against injustice, rebellion against and resistance to despotism, including the right of tyrannicide is embodied in the basic constitution of the Khalsa. To ask the Sikhs now to degenerate into a herd of unquestioning camp-followers and submissive slaves is simply preposterous. No amount of spurious arguments or tendentious write-ups can change this basic position.

It is being argued that since the Sikhs have made a mess of arts and practices of Government in the Punjab recently, it is a conclusive argument against any aspiration

by the Sikhs to acquire and exercise political power. It is significant that this argument is advanced by those who claim to be for the Sikhs, as well as by those who make no secret of their antipathy and political hostility towards the Sikhs. Who is the master-mind and who the tool in this game is anybody's guess. Anyhow, this is a strange type of logic. Nobody is more painfully aware than the writer of these lines as to how the Sikhs have mismanaged their political affairs in recent years. But is this state of affairs peculiar to the Sikhs alone in India ? Throughout the country there has been general decline in norms and standards of political and personal conduct. The third-rater, the bully and the thug are having it their own way and the decent and the scrupulous have been systematically elbowed out of the political arena of the country everywhere and at all levels. Processes of democracy have been subverted to serve the ends of self-aggrandizement and dishonesty and corruption is the order of the day. True, the Sikhs are somewhat crude and unsophisticated in perversion of the political game, but that also makes them less vicious and dangerous to the interest of the country and the nation. Though one could sympathize with the argument that the Sikhs who refuse bifurcate politics from religion ought to have known and done better. This is no argument to shunt the Sikhs out of the main-stream of the Indian history by asking them to eschew political activity and aspiration for being at decision-making levels of the politics of their country. Such an argument can be advanced only by those who desire, above all things to see that the Sikh religion and the Sikh society are consigned to the limbo of the past. Surely, this cannot be the aim of any Sikh intellectual, if he is a Sikh at all whether he has made a mark in his worldly profession, is an adept in *namsimran* or is a master of the esoteric science of psychoanalysis.

What counts in history is continuity and fecundity. The Sikhs must multiply and expand and they must remain at all costs, in the vanguard of political activity, or they must squeeze, deliquesce and be smashed and squashed up. There is no third alternative. There is a pathological human urge to crush those who are weak, particularly those who once were not so and thus by renouncing or failure in the game of politics the Sikhs expose themselves to double jeopardy, not mere extinction but ignoble extinction. The Guru has bidden the Sikhs never to listen to such dark evil counsels. Guru Gobind Singh, himself, has told us that a man forbidden to wear unlicensed arms and reduced to a shorn slave in appearance, is verily like a sheep liable to be led to the slaughter house by whosoever may wish to do so, *Bina sastra kesam naru bhed jano, Gahe kan ta ko kite le sidhano*, are the followers of this Guru Gobind Singh now to accept the advice and exhortations of those who tell us that political power vitiates human soul and that it is forbidden to a Sikh to engage in political activity or those who tell us that some Freud or Jung has said such and such a thing about anatomy of power-politics ? Then Guru Gobind Singh warns us that: 'he, who would relinquish his firm grip on the hilt of the sword must prepare his fleshy neck to receive the sharp edge of a sword in the hands of another, *Khadag hath jin*

tajio khadag dhara saho. Are the followers of this Guru Gobind Singh to be enamoured by the siren calls of those who tell us, as our Chandigarh friend does in his paper-back, that since, during the British days many Sikhs engaged themselves in *nam-simran* while undergoing life-imprisonments in the dark dungeons of foreign rulers in distant parts of India and Andaman Islands, therefore, a state of slavery and subjugation must be deemed as highly conducive to the practice of true Sikh religion?

Let the Sikhs make no mistake about it that unless they wake up and delve deep into their own souls to rediscover the direction which the Guru gave them, they are facing the mortal danger of being pushed out of the main stream of History and of eventual extinction. This 'national integration', this talk of 'secularism' in which politics is supposed to be freed and disassociated from religion, originate from those who have now usurped the political strings of the destiny of India. They have brazen-facedly adopted all the tactics of Tammany Hall bosses to push out decent element out of the political life-by manufacturing wholesale bogus memberships in their own organizations and engineering bogus votings at public elections. Thus they have managed to maintain a fraudulent facade of democracy, reduced politics to a filthy game which nobody wishing to keep his hands clean can play and have turned public life into an arena infested by hoodlums, hooligans and other undesirable elements. Their self-interest is their only concern. People have been made to live from day to day on false hopes created by empty slogans and empty promises. The little prosperity brought about by developmental progress has been misappropriated by crooked politicians, briberous bureaucracy, unscrupulous industrialists and black-marketing businessmen. They have brought about total eclipse of moral values in all spheres of life. This dishonest and unpatriotic group are living in vulgar indulgence and ostentation. These people can be no guides, for us, the Sikhs, and the only True Guide for us is the Guru who can help us here and redeem us hereafter. Bishop Berkeley is right in saying that, "he who hath not meditated upon God the human mind and the *summum bonum* may make a thriving earthworm but a sorry statesman."

This calamity to India and to our nation must be staved off. This can be done, in theory, by a good, efficient and honest government manned by competent persons of unquestionable character in whom the people can repose their confidence. It is in this context that the Sikhs have to consider as to what their duty towards themselves, towards the Guru, towards the country and the nation is. Not by following the string leads of these politicians can the Sikhs do any good to themselves or to the country. Not by giving up political activity and aspirations to political power can they discharge the duty which the Guru and History have placed on their shoulders. This duty was well perceived by General Barker, the Commander-in-chief of the East India army, when on the 19th August, 1771 he wrote to Sirdar Jhanda Singh Bhangi that, "it is clear that as long as the Khalisah is on the watch no one can march upon Hindustan." This danger of 'march upon Hindustan' has been there since the dawn of

history and the lapse of two centuries since General Barker wrote to the Sikh Sirdar, this danger has assumed the form of a double threat, of military invasion as well as the more disastrous ideological invasion such as can destroy the very soul of India. This makes the duty of the Sikhs much more complex and onerous. Their duty, therefore, is firstly. To carve out and establish for themselves a congenial habitat and *milieu* where in the guiding impulses and postulates of the Sikh society freely operate and fructify. Their second task is to so organize and equip themselves as to play the vital role of being a cultural and political bridge between the Aryan India and the Semitic western Asia. India is, by nature and historical circumstances now destined to become a great nation and a great power on the material and cultural planes, both. Unless the Sikhs play their part properly and well they shall be guilty of treason toward India and the Indian people, towards History and towards mankind. Above all they shall have betrayed the task entrusted to them by the Sikh Gurus, that of creating a just, forwardlooking, equalitarian and plural society wherein the spiritual values of mutual tolerance, cooperation and undersanding can prosper and thus to play a vital role such as truly behoves and befits them.

The demand for Sikh Homeland arises out of this context and it certainly is not something conceived by this individual politician or that and harped on by those who are supposed not to understand either the tenets of Sikh religion or the spirit of Sikh ethos.

In the persent age, when all political power has devolve upon the people, to try to renounce it would be the greatest act of folly on the part of the Sikhs in their collectivity. Those who would aspire to and legitimately acquire this political power at the decision-making levels shall become the elect and the chosen people and those who renounce or edge away from it shall become the defeated and the vanquished ones. *Vae Victis* is a Roman piece of wisdom which means, 'woe to the vanquished'. Do some of our Sikh intellectuals wish the Sikhs to have the fate of the vanquished and do these intellectuals know what this fate is, and has been throughout the ages ? The vanquished are the dust under the feet of the conqueror and the dirt on his shoes. The vanquished are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Is the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh, the revered Khalsa of the Eternal God, *Sat Sri Akal purkh ji ka Khalsa ji Sahib*, to be reduced to this condition ? Have these Sikhs read as to what happened to the women, children, treasures of art and culture of the Russians subjected to German invasion during the last World War? Have they read the accounts and Diaries now published by some women who were caught up in Berlin when Russians occupied it in 1945 ? Do they know what happened to the Sikh women, the Sikh sacred heirlooms when the Punjab was invaded by the soldiery of U. P. in 1845 ? Every virgin and every woman on the road leading to Lahore was raped and degraded by this mercenary Uttar Pradesh soldiery, *purbias*, as we called them and it was to avenge this, mainly, that the Sikhs joined hands with the British

during the Mutiny of 1857. In the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1965, it is now known, that but for the obduracy of a certain Sikh General it had almost been decided to abandon the entire Punjab west of Ambala to the invading Pakistani tanks. Just a week or ten days of occupation of the Sikh Homeland by the soldiers of Marshal Ayub and not a single Sikh virgin or a single Sikh rupee or a single Sikh sacred spot would have retained its purity or dignity, And the Sikh world its generals, barristers and psychoanalysts notwithstanding, would have been enveloped by darkness and decay for fifty years at least If not forever. Guru Nanak has warned that, "When the focus of holiness, the spots of sanctity and the areas of pride of a people are violated, desecrated and degraded, then the people sank down into despairing gloom and state of object surrender", *Ihanist jag bhrast hoe dubta iv jag*. Will the Sikhs not wake up and prepare themselves for such an eventuality which may befall them one fine morning when they wake up from under their greasy quilts after a long evening booze ? No amount of fine exegesis of the Sikh scripture made by our intellectuals will come to the rescue of the Sikhs when such a fate overtakes them. No amount of joined supplicatory hands or muttering the name of God will save them from total degradation and humiliation. But if they wake up in time, turn their faces towards the Guru, and salvage their political personality in a constitutionally established Sikh Homeland within the Union of India there is every prospect of such a fate to the Sikhs and shame to India being averted.

Ananda Coomaraswamy in his *Essays in National Idealism* (1921) wrote:

"We want our India for ourselves, because we believe each nation has its own part to play in the long tale of human progress and nations which are not free to develop their individuality and character are also unable to make the contribution to the sum of human culture which the world has a right to expect of them."

This is the essence of the central argument for creation of the Sikh Homeland.

That when political power came to the Sikhs in the 19th century and again, far a few years in an attenuated form, in the 20th century in the shape of Akali ministry led from the nose by a theandric saint, it gave rise to gross abuses deleterious for the purity of Sikh doctrine and the dignity of the Sikh image is not an argument against political power, but is merely an acknowledgement of a basic human frailty. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is a truth not originally discovered by Lord Acton, Kautilya, the high priest of political power in his *Arthashastra*, tells us that, 'power invariably tends to pervert human mind' *balam hi cittam vakroti*. Kautilya does not draw the inference that political activity and power must be renounced as *per se* evil; he expounds detailed rules how to acquire political power and then cling to it at all costs so that the ethical values and the Social order in which they inhere may be duly protected. The great Samkaracarya in his *Opadesikpancika*

announces that 'the fundamental disease of human body is the hunger' *ksuhdarogam*, but he does not proceed to recommend fast-unto-death as the remedy, he enjoins strict and scientific regulation of food, *pratidinam bhikshosdham bhujyatam*.

Why must the Sikhs be such simpletons as to recommend for themselves renunciation of political power, against all canons of commonsense, against all lesson of History, against the historical experience of the Sikh community, against the traditions set by their ancestors and against the teaching of the Guru ?

Sikhs must want to live as all living things do, they cannot be asked to agree to die.

Sikh society, the Khalsa, is an organic living society with a unique character, it asks to be accepted as equal because it is unique, as each individual is unique.

Sir Lapel Griffen when he wrote the *Life of Ranjit Singh*. In the year 1840 said of the political talent of the Sikhs that :

"To the Brahmins (Hindus) and the Mohammendans (Muslims) alone did the hereditary talent of Government (understanding of politics) belong..... Against the cultured intelligence of those races, what had the poor Sikh cultivator, stupid as his own buffaloes, to oppose ? Not to him the triumphs of diplomacy and the conflict to quick intellects in the atmosphere of a court, He could do no more than plough straight and fight. In the intellectual competition with Brahmins and Mohammedans he was as a cart horse pitted against thorough breds."

In 1947, H. V. Hodson, the Constitutional Adviser to Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India was constrained to observe in his publication, *The Great Divide*, that,

"Time and again the powers that were in the central Government of India complained of political incompetence of the Sikhs."

As if being a herd of incompetent stupid buffaloes in politics was not enough for us, we are now throwing up a class of *pseudo*—intellectuals who are engaged in preaching, day and night, that Sikhism is a church of worship only that *raj karega Khalsa* is a fabricated anti-Sikh litany and that the demand for Sikh Homeland is made by half-wits and self-seeking politicians.

May the Rider of the Blue Horse now Himself redeem the promise he has made of coming to the aid and rescue of the Khalsa whenever grave danger threatens it.



SIKHISM AND THE WORLD SOCIETY

On Nov. 3, 1974 the author arrived at Toronto to attend to certain engagements when he learnt that in the Occumenical Institute of the University was scheduled to meet on the 5th November, to consider as to how best all the world-religions can mutually cooperate to help solve the most urgent current problems of mankind of peace and war, hunger and emergence of a world society, that is God-oriented.

The author learnt that no Sikh had been invited, although preparations for this gathering had been afoot for the whole of the past year.

On his enquiries he was informed that 'Sikhism' was not accepted as an autonomous or a world-religion and the representatives of Hinduism, therefore, were deemed as sufficiently qualified to refer to Sikhism, if necessary, during those momentous discussions.

As Sirdar Sahib expressed a wish to participate in these deliberations, as a Sikh spokesman, he was shown the courtesy of being formally invited.

The gathering was about 50/60 strong elites, representing, Hinduism, Buddhism (Hinayan, Mahayan, Tantrayana, Tibetan Buddhism and modern western Buddhism), from India, Ceylon, Tibet, Korea, North Vietnam and Bhuttan, and Islam was represented by Sunni, Shia, *Ahmadi* and *Ismaili* sects of Islam. Almost all Sects of Christianity were well-represented, as was Judaism.

On the following note being considered, it was deemed of sufficient importance to claim most of the time of the deliberations and in conclusion there was reached a consensus that Sikhism as the most recent and modern world-religion was entitled to special attention in relation to the problems that had engaged the minds of the delegates. We hope the readers will find it very informative and interesting.

— Editor

"I may say that there are, broadly speaking five categories of religions from the point of view of outlook and institutional action, that is their scope of prevailment.

- (1) Religions that are ethnic, grounded in the conviction that entitlement to and direct benefits of the, or their religion are divinely and irrevocably reserved for a particular ethnic tribe constituting the God-ordained elites of Religion, 'the Chosen People', in special covenant with God. Judaism is the well-known instance of this category of religions.
- (2) Those who claim that entitlement to and direct benefits of their religion are freely open to the Jew and the Gentile, that is, all the people of the world if and only if they accept the religion in question and its verbal formulations as the exclusive repository of Truth. The oecumenical religions of Christianity and Islam belong to this category.
- (3) Religion that insists that since penultimate and highest religions experience is essentially obtainable as the end-result of a long-series of birth and re-births of a soul within the context of a particular geographic and cultural milieu through the process of merempsyehosis, the path and benefits of the true religion are accessible exclusively to a genetic racial group confined to a specified geographic habitat. By understanding thus alone can the Hindu claim that "it is an exclusive privilege and grace of God that enables man to be born a Hindu in the sacred land called, Bharat, that is India; a birth in other lands, no matter of how excellent a condition and however frequently, is no better than a repetitious frustration and wearisome waste."¹ The basic postulate of this doctrine is that the multitudinous personal experiences of the present as well as the characteristics of the body holding the experiencing self are the expression of the past acts in some residual and seminal form by a transmigrating entity or principle. A Hindu would explain that the fundamental convictions of the votaries of religions (1) and (2) arise out of prolonged and laborious studies of obscure phenomenon and mysterious human faculties, that can be understood properly only if the aforementioned basic postulate of Hinduism is conceded and accepted which provides the rationale of Hindu claim regarding birth in a genetic Hindu family in India.
- (4) Religions that postulate that the fact of religious experience being non-intellectual and non-cognitive implicates that operative level of the religion must be the *upaya*, the provisional means, and not doctrines and concepts,

1. *Krsnanugrahato labhadava manave janam bharte,
anyasthane birta janam misphlanca gata gatam.*

beliefs and dogmas and these *upaya* have to be as variable as the beings whose spiritual foods they are meant to supply. Buddhism as the export-form of Hinduisim, is a religion of this category with its numerous expressions ranging from Hinayana, the original ethico-philosophical religion, to Mahayana, Vairayana, Tantrayana, Mantrayana, Tibetan Buddhism and the Zen to mention only the major manifestations of Buddhism.

- (5) The Religion that aims at transcending all particularism in religion and points towards a religious experience realized as the All-Ground of all particular religious experiences and which, therefore, does not confront dogma with dogma and belief with belief and which does not aim at religious conversion so much as authentic religious life and it thus primarily a bridge-maker and not a universal conqueror or all-leveller, such as oecumenical religions, like Islam and Christianity tend to be. Sikhism, being a religion of this category does not outrightly reject or oppose other doctrines or dogmas but demands true dialogue rather than conversion as the goal transcending particularisms of other religions, as it preaches that beyond, lies not a universal concept, not synthesis or syncretic amalgam but deeper penetration of one's own religion in thought, devotion and action. It upholds that in the depth of every religion—living religion—there is a point at which religion itself loses its importance, and that to which points it breaks through its particularity elevating it to spiritual freedom and with it to a vision of the spiritual presence in other expression of the ultimate meanings of existence.
2. The religions of the category (1) are of due exclusivity engrossed in and preoccupied with the maintenance and preservation of their own identity and their status spiritual privilegia through political and social viability.
3. The religions of category (2) in the case of Christianity, believing that, the nature of things is divine love for the created world, aim at a will to create through suffering and a movement of such wills that is expected to lead to establishment of a new 'Kingdom' and state of affairs in human history in which God's Will is 'done on earth as it is in Heaven.'
4. The other variety of category (2) of which Islam is an expression par-excellence, aims at and strives for, al-jihad, a universal or dominant monolithic, close Muslim world-society in which the laws of personal conduct and social organisation revealed unambiguously and finally by God through Prophet Mohammed are obeyed and enforced—this being the ultimate purpose of God in creating the world and the man and which Muslim

society is to be enlarged and strengthened progressively through the policy of 'enforcement if Islamic laws through sword.' *as-shara' tahatus-saif*.

5. The category (3) religions are insular, self-sufficient and self-engrossed, concerned only with ensuring external non-interference and their internal purity.
6. The religions of category (4) are a-social, catholic and concerned exclusively with awakening in the individual in his personal capacity and not in his position as a limb of the society-transcendental consciousness, *prajna* the wisdom that liberates from the limitations of all names and forms.
7. The religions of the category (5) that is Sikhism, freely recognizes that search for a fundamental unity of religions or the attempts at the religions reproachment have their limitations, for, there are fundamental differences in the conceptions of reality and attitudes towards the world, permanently impeding a real and lasting synthesis between basically incompatible elements, preaches frank and unreserved dialogue between various religions, and the human groups that owe allegiance to these religions, so as to arrive at the experience that transcends religious particularism and realizes a base of identity underneath all modes of religious expression. As a corollary thereof Sikhism favours a plural, free, open and progressive human society, God-oriented, non-aggressive but firm and ever ready to combat against rise and growth of evil, through organized resistance, and forward looking yet nonambitious. For facilitating emergence of this state of affairs it has conceived of and recommends organized and co-operative efforts of man of good-will, indicating the true sources of dynamism available to man for this purpose, the details of which however are outside the scope of this short note.

Courtesy 'The Sikh Courier'

'The Sikh Review' have published a brief report on Sirdar Kapur Singh's representation of Sikhism in the University of Toronto in 1975 which is being reproduced along with editor's note at the instance of readers of Sikhism.



RAJ KAREGA KHALSA

On the 20th July, 1975, a Government-sponsored, All Communities' Convention was held at Patiala to chalk out a programme for the ter-centenary celebrations of the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, addressing which the nonagenarian venerable Sardar Bahadur, Bhai Jodh Singh, ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Patiala University, exhorted the audience, as the *Daily Tribune*, Chandigarh of the next morning tells us, that,

"In celebration of Guru's martyrdom, a vigorous campaign should be launched against the wrong belief that State Power was necessary to sustain any religion. Politics, he emphasised, must be insulated from religion."

2. This declaration of Bhai Jodh Singh was apparently somewhat irrelevant for the occasion but not so is its underwater ice-berg base which is always much more substantial and dangerous than the visible apex.
3. It is not generally appreciated that,
 - (1) Bhai Jodh Singh has been an active politician during the British as well as the post-British period under the guise of a religious man and he has never deemed it fit to insulate his own politics from his religion, with the result that grateful and appreciative foreign rulers conferred upon him the high distinction and title of *Sardar Bahadur* in addition to other tokens of favour, and in the post-British period also he has been in much demand by those in political power.
 - (2) A clear-headed person that Bhai Jodh Singh is, he does not say, in so many words that; 'insulation of politics from religion is a definite Sikh doctrine; he merely proffers it as his own piece of secular and pagan wisdom, for he

is aware that Sikh doctrine and tradition both hold politics as isolated from religion as pedagogy; opportunism and unprincipled trickery. Only by implication and through insinuation he desires that the Sikhs should accept the views of those whose voice he is that, such, indeed, is the true Sikh doctrine.

- (3) The British who subjugated the Sikhs and throughout remained in terror of them as well as held them in manly admiration, secretly desired that the Sikhs should remain somewhat obscure about the true Sikh doctrine embodied in their shrill historical and fundamental cry of 'liberty or death' — *raj karain ikke lar mar hain* (*Unexpurgated, Prācīn Panth prakāsh*), and there can be no doubt that, by them Bhai Jodh Singh was found as a useful ally.
- (4) The current rulers of India even have not made any secret of their desire and determination to wean the Sikhs away from the core-teachings of their Gurus that, the Sikhs cannot fulfil their divine spiritual and social assignments without their own base of political power and that for a Sikh to insulate politics from religion is an un-utterably abominable degradation and fall from grace.
4. It is in this background that the Patiala performance of Bhai Jodh Singh has to be critically examined.
5. Bhai Jodh Singh's singularly unfortunate Patiala utterances, namely, that, (a) It is a wrong belief that State-power is necessary to sustain any religion, Sikhism included, (b) that this 'wrong belief' deserves to be dispelled through a high-priority effort integrated with the religious projects and organised plans of the Sikhs, and (c) that Politics must be insulated from Religion, altogether which he insinuates is the true Sikh position, are altogether unsustainable, and the revered Bhai took a most undue advantage by publicising his own credo from a platform of Sikh religion and he also proceeded to enjoin upon the Sikhs his debatable personal opinions as an integral part of Sikhism.
6. The Sikh position on the all-time tantalising questions of (1) Politics *versus*

Religion, (2) State power and Sikhism, and (3) Political sovereignty and the Practice of Sikh religion, is unambiguously codified in the litany sung daily in all free Sikh congregations ever since the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh (1707), the litany being *srimukh-vāk*, 'the very blessed words' of the Guru Himself:

Rāj Karegā Khalsā akī rahe na koi.

Khwār hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe.

(The Sikh people shall remain free and sovereign, always, none challenging this position. All, every one, must eventually accept this position no matter how unpalatable and bitter it, to them, be. And, behold, peace and safety is in such a concession, or submission.)

7. This startlingly tall and audacious claim has been publicly proclaimed by the Sikh people during the last three centuries, firmly and defiantly and it has moved many to sheer ridicule, others to fright, still others to resentment and boiling-heat anger, many Sikhs themselves to chicken-hearted, craven fear or shameless apologia and the political Hindus of the post-1947 euphoria, it has, almost invariably moved to greater contempt for those whom they see as already in their last death-throes.
8. Be that as it may, it is legitimate to examine as to whether the Sikh doctrine itself is devoid of historical perceptiveness and realistic out-look, and whether it stands the test of scientific scrutiny. Thus alone its intrinsic validity can be judged, however, unpalatable or *prima facie* impracticable it might otherwise appear in the case of present day Sikh people, politically subjugated, culturally submerged, intellectually confused and barren, morally decayed, economically deprived and plundered through the Partition of India and religiously profaned it can not be, off-hand asserted or insinuated that this Sikh doctrine is *prima facie* ill-conceived or stupid or unsustainable.
9. Let us glance through the World History, ever since well defined and locatable civilizations have emerged and we find that there have always

been, at any given period, one or two nations, peoples, which were leading *raj-jātī*, characterised by the ethos of, *Rāj Karegā Khālsā*, or nations or peoples who were admired and were tacitly imitated by others. There is no exception known to this rule.

10. This phase of leadership, political or moral or both, has passed from one nation to another in rotation, and, in historical times, no nation has yet enjoyed it twice. Whether such is some hard and fast law of History cannot be asserted.
11. By way of illustration, might be mentioned, the early Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians under Achaemenid dynasty from 550 B. C. to 330 B. C. But the Greeks are the earliest who still seem to live in the thoughts of the Western man to day, just as the Confucian China does in its 'barbarian' periphery and the Hindus in the Buddhist Far East and Southeast Asia. A remarkable aspect of the Greek leadership was that it never took the political form of a single empire except for a very few years in the life-time of Alexander of Macedon. Owing to a variety of circumstances, local and accidental, the empire broke up at his death, but Greek dynasties, Greek thought and Greek methods of war, nevertheless, dominated a large part of the world for three centuries and more.
12. Greek eminence gave way to Roman, Roman ideas, Roman fashions, and Roman armies held undisputed leadership for some four centuries. Roman concepts of imperial domination and organisation and Roman ethos of social insularity were strictly observed and practised by the British rulers of India. Upto the end of Nehru regime even in a free India, these Roman concepts held *sway* in our governmental atmosphere, through WOGS—Westernised Oriental Gentlemen, the I. C. S. men and Nehruite politicians.
13. After about two centuries of confusion, Arabs appeared on the World-stage as the International leaders, sustaining the most powerful empire of their time from A.D. 650 to A.D. 850. After the commencement of their political decline they remained the leaders in thought and Science for five hundred years more.

14. When the Arabic-speaking people fell behind, they had already passed on the torch of art, learning, Science and Industry to Western Europe. Here the lead was first assumed by the Holy Roman Empire, then by Spain, France and Britain in that order.
15. In our own life-time, we have witnessed the leadership moving on to the United States of America and Russia.
16. Certain general laws, as operative in the field of international leadership, are clearly seen to emerge.
17. Firstly, there is always an element of strength involved. Whether or not the great nation imposes its military rule by military conquest and occupation, it is always power that produces imitation. France did not conquer a vast territory in the 17th and 18th centuries, yet French became the diplomatic language of the world, French instructors were engaged to train the armies of other nations as in the case of the Sikhs in the first half of the 19th century, and French furniture, French literature and the French cooking were everywhere supreme.
18. In our own life-time, the U. S. A. has not imposed military occupation on many nations, yet American slang, American clothes, American music, the horribly noisy concupiscent *jazz*, the American architecture of crazy skyscrapers have spread all over the world. Herein lies the true explanation of over 90% Sikh migrants to the U. S. A., Canada, British Isles and Western Europe, unashamedly falling in for the ugly unaesthetic, barbarous fashion of clean-shaven faces and the pernicious, unclean habit of smoking, while the Sikh migrants to the African continent and the Southeast Asian regions have retained their Sikh dignity of uncut hair and healthy and sensible abhorrence of smoking upto recent times.
19. We can scarcely claim that this is due to the fact that they, the U. S. A. culture-patterns, are intrinsically better than anything which could be produced anywhere else.
20. There is obviously something in human nature which causes us to

immitate the thought and mannerisms of those who are physically strong and it was to this secret that Guru Gobind Singh drew mankind's attention when he declared that, "in this world of phenomenon, everything, is covered and controlled by the *Time-sword*, and men tend to lean on the mightiest":

*'yā jag main sabh kāl-kirpān ke bhārī bhujān kau bhārī bhroso.'*¹

21. How else can we explain the back-sliding of almost 80 lacs of Sikhs in 1849, to a mere 18 lacs of Sikhs in the Census of 1862 ? What explains, if not decay of political power and might of the Sikhs in 1850, the conversion of Raja Sir Harnam Singh and Sadhu Sunder Singh to Christianity, the conversion to Islam of the learned *ulema*, Obeidullah Sindhi, and the father and family of internationally-famous jurist, Sir Mohd. Zaffar-Ullah Khan ? What made the scion of the martyr Bhai Mati Das, the late Bhai Parmanand, his son and son-in-law, and the uniquely vital off-spring of a devout *sahajdhāri* Sikh family, Dr. Şir Gokal Chand Narang break away from the gravitational orbit of Sikhism and stray into the barren wastelands of Aryasamaj ? Again, during the short historical span of their existence, the Sikhs have seen much misunderstanding and malice, prejudice and persecution, fierce onslaughts and genocide pogroms, victory and glory, power and prosperity, defeat and subjugation, ridicule and abasement, poverty and deprivation, and yet throughout these vicissitudes, neither friend nor foe, neither neighbour nor stranger, through ill-will or ignorance has ever dared or cared to belittle or denigrate the great Sikh Prophets, the Gurus, in respect of their thoughts, words or deeds, universally holding them in highest estimation; as men, leaders of men and religious Prophets Malcolm, McGregor, Cunningham, Dorothy Field, Toynbee, Sujan Rai, Khushwaqt Rai, Daulat Ram, Mohammad Latif display unanimity here though much multinimity elsewhere, while writing on Sikhs and Sikhism. But, for the first time when the Sikhs missed the bus in 1947 and became what they now have become, and even when they succeeded, in the changed circumstances, in establishing a University of Sikh Culture called

1. *Akālustat*

the Punjabi University at Patiala, and a University of Sikh Religion called, the Guru Nanak Dev University, at Amritsar, 'Sikh' professors in these Universities boldly surfaced to proclaim and argue that Guru Tegh Bahadur was a robber-chief, in the habit of providing succour and incitement to likeminded lawless elements, which misdeeds of his brought upon him the nemesis of the Mughal law leading to his public decapitation as a criminal, at Delhi, of which just punishment, the Great Mughal, Aurangzeb, was altogether innocent and ignorant, that the main and original grievance of Guru Gobind Singh against the good Mughal Government was that land revenue and State taxes were demanded of him, according to law which he was reluctant to pay, and that he met defeat after defeat in his conflicts with the State forces owing to his poor knowledge of field-strategy. Has the current political status of the Sikh people nothing to do with this disgusting phenomenon? Delhi-based pseudo-Nirankaris are not being discussed here for obvious reasons.

22. These are only few instances of the operative and decisive role which political power and prestige play in relation to acceptability and prevalence of a religion and this law of History, the basic pattern of human behaviour and tendency of human nature is more pertinent in the case of Sikhs and Sikhism, for, Sikhism, unlike most other world-religions, is not merely a Church of worship but is simultaneously, a Church of social policy also, and as soon as the Sikh people are separated from and deprived of political sovereignty and power, Sikhism becomes eviscerated of its elan and true ethos. It is for this reason that the ambition, the claim, and the destiny, adumbrated and proclaimed in the litany : *rāj karegā Khālsā* is basic to Sikh religion and the assignees of its social commitments, the Sikh people, and the second homistich of this litany : *ākī rahe na koi* is merely complementary to the first, both being obverse and reverse sides of the same medal.

23. The *shāntimayi*, *satyagraha*, *ahimsā* of the twenties and thirties of this century in India were merely subtle shiboleths and Hindus' political gadgets to vex and exasperate the oxbridgian ruling Englishman, and Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, has rightly recorded (*The Viceroy's Journal*, London,

1973, p. 238) that "He (Gandhi) is a very tough politician and not a saint", and in this subtle political game the simplistic Sikhs became its first and most willing sacrificial victims, by voluntarily twisting the very fundamentals of their own religion by declaring that Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur were embodiments, 'avtārs', of *shāntimayi* and *ahimsā*. Not long ago, in a faked, *All World Sikh Conference* at Amritsar, during the hegemony of the two late lamented *sants* in Sikh politics, the main 'resolution' adopted specifically named these two Gurus as the Sikhs' only models and guides, thus, repudiating, what they heretically believed to be; 'the other and different' eight Gurus, a doctrine destructive of the very roots of Sikhism. Has not Guru Gobind Singh unambiguously declared that he who deems and understands one Sikh Guru as different from the others, is no Sikh? "The essence of Sikhism is to know and believe all the Ten Gurus as one continuous, unbroken Spirit, and a failure to understand and accept this is a failure to adopt true Sikhism"—*jini jāniā tinu hī sidhi pāī, binu jāne siddhi hāthu na āī*. We must ever remember that the general disapproval of conquest, U. N. O. hotchpotch, "territorial integrity", "non-interference in internal affairs", non-alignment, the *Pancashil*, etc. etc. is a temporary phenomenon.

24. Let us hearken to one who, by the test laid down by Guru Gobind Singh, is "verily a true man", for, "he says what he has in mind and there is no disparity between his intentions and his spoken word":

*Humān mard bāyed shuvād sukhanwar,
na shikme digar dar dahāne digar;*²

He is, by no means, an insignificant person in the contemporary world, Mao Tse Tung.

"Wherever the army of Chinese Communist Party goes, it creates Marxism-Leninism, it creates a Communist Party and a Communist Government. Only guns and canons create a Party, a culture, even a world."

(*Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, Yen-an, December, 1939)

"Whoever has an army has power, for, war settles everything."

(*Problems of War and Strategy*, November 6, 1936)

"Everything grows out of the barrel of a gun."

(*Selected Works*, Vol. II, New York, International Publishers, 1954, p. 272)

25. There is no doubt whatsoever that, throughout History, military conquest and balance-of-terror Principle have been the principal means by which the torch of leadership has been passed on. The conquest of Alexander, the Great spread Greek thought over Middle East. The military empire of Rome gave civilisation to innumerable backward areas and races. When Rome collapsed Arabs were just in time to snatch the fallen torch. The immediate result of Arab ascendancy was to plunge the West once more into barbarism by isolating it from Asia, but before the Arabs fell, or as the famous Ibni-Khaldun (1332-1406) puts it, in his, *Muqaddameh* the Arabs lost their *a'sbiyveh*, basic elan, they handed back the trust to Europe with interest.
26. Secondly, the mantle of leadership frequently falls on the shoulders of a colony of its predecessor. The Arabs derived much of their knowledge from Syria, Egypt and North Africa hitherto colonies of Rome. Spain conquered by the Arabs was to succeed them as a great empire and the U.S.A. began as a British colony.
27. It, therefore, follows that the Sikh claim and doctrine (1) that religious worship and social commitment are inter-related, (2) that political participation and power are complementary to Sikh religious activity and, (3) that the aspiration to political power to be employed as a fulcrum for social change and upliftment are legitimate Sikh activities, are neither (a) ungrounded in the firm patterns of History, (b) contrary to the tenets of Sikhism, or (c) otherwise impracticable or fantastic merely because of the current depressed, degraded condition and colonial subsidiary status of the Sikhs.

28. When the Sikhs say that politics and religion must not be separated, that is not to claim that the Sikhs have a direct hot line to the deity. It merely means that a man's public, private and spiritual life are inseparable and that the most fruitful and secure is the synergical culture wherein the religion, and the social order facilitate the individual, by the same act and at the same time, to serve his own advantage and that of the group.
29. Sardar Bahadur, Bhai Jodh Singh's gratuitous exhortation to the Sikhs at Patiala is a clear negation of the Sikh doctrine, the lessons of Sikh history and the unambiguous and uncompromisingly clear teachings of the Sikh Gurus.
30. We must now consider whether the discoveries of Modern Science and the insights they provide and the guidance they suggest for understanding human nature and planning of human society, also called "Social Engineering" by those who must put old wine in new bottles before tasting it, agree with or militate against the basic Sikh doctrine enshrined in the litany: *rāj karega Khālsā*.
31. The latest Scientific discipline is Ethology, founded by three winners of the 1973 award of Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, which has gone to Karl von Frisch, Nikolas Tinbergen and Konrad Lorenz. The last-named of them wrote his prize-winning dissertation as early as 1966, *On Aggression*, in which book he has advanced and established the thesis that the man is not only an innately aggressive animal and a hostile one at that, but that the principle of aggressiveness in his instinctual structure, demonstrates and establishes the inevitability of war. He further demonstrates the utility and necessity of aggressiveness for human life and he concludes that aggression is a vital demension of human nature. For these fundamental discoveries in the Science of Physiology he has been awarded the Nobel Prize, with two others, as co-laureates, four years ago.
32. In 1974, Desmond Morris, an erstwhile pupil of our Nobel Prize laureate, Nikolas Tinbergen, at Oxford supported Lorenz's theory as one of the naked truths of his book: *Naked Ape* in which, in prosaic scientific terminology, he has paraphrased, so to speak, the prophetic wisdom of

Guru Gobind Singh : "Aggression and Destruction is primary and Genesis is secondary."

*Prithame khandā sāj kai sabh sansar upāiyā.*³

33. In the sphere of literary fiction, William Golding, in his novel, *Lord of the Flies*, has demonstrated existence of the aggressive instinct, in his powerful literary style. He portrays in his book, the story of young children, stranded on an island, who revert to savagery, once all restraints of civilisation are removed and withdrawn.
34. Robert Andrey, a prestigious dramatist, turned, anthropologist, in three successive successful best-sellers, *African Genesis*, *The Territorial Imperative*, and *The Social Contract* has accumulated, classified and interpreted adequate material to explode, once for all finally, the thesis and fallacy that man is a pacific being, that *ahimsā* is his core-essence or that non-violent satyagraha is a basic technic of human existence, survival and progress.
35. All these influential theorists have come to their opinions via Ethology, the study of behaviour from the zoological view-point. Ethology involves systematic study of the evolution of human traits through observation of non-human behaviour.
36. Karl von Frisch, our Nobel Prize laureate of 1973 spent his time with birds, fish and bees; Lorenz with grey geese, rats and fighting fish; Tinbergen with birds, and Morris with apes in the London zoo.
37. Lorenz sees "aggression, far from being a destructive principle, as one of the life-preserving functions of the basic instincts". He considers the pertinent question : Will not ingroup aggression extinguish the group and ultimately the species ? His reply is in the negative, for, the strong, he says, learn not to destroy the weak. The Evolution Process is responsible not only for aggression, but also for the phenomenon of inherited patterns of restraint that control and regulate aggression.

3. *Vār srībhagauti jī kī.*

38. These patterns display in the submission of the weaker to the stronger through gestures of appeasement to the stronger : the defeated one or the subordinated ally is never killed and destroyed. This is the true exegesis of the Sikh litany : *bace saran jo hoe*. Thus the instinct to dominate and destroy:

rāj karegā khālsā ākī rahe na koi,

can be and is modified if and when the inferior and the weaker can learn abasement, submission and the survival-value of alliance *khwār hoe sabh milenge*. In his analogy between man and bird, Lorenz sees the basic secret of survival and evolution embedded in Nature—*qudret* of Sikh philosophical concepts—that if the powerful will learn to subdue and not to kill and destroy and the weak will learn not to resist but to submit, all strife, wars and revolutions will come to an end and man will no longer have to concern himself with problems of survival. It is full awareness of this secret of Nature which is evidenced in the Sikh War Ethics and practices testified to by the enemy-chronicler, Qazi Nur Muhammed, in his, *Jangnāmeh* (1765) that the Sikhs "never kill in battle those who lay down arms or otherwise refuse to resist and fight", *kih nakushand nāmard ra hīc-gāh-farārendeh rā ham nā girand rāh*.

39. The disturbing truth is there that the man shares this gruesome propensity with the dove, including Picasso's dove adopted by Russians as the emblem of their variety of 'Peace'. In his well-known book, *King Solomon's Ring*, Lorenz, in the Chapter entitled, 'Morals and Weapons', shares with us one of his most disquietening discoveries by telling the reader, how the dove, while by reputation one of the most peaceful birds, is, in reality, one of the cruelest, and it will mutilate and destroy members of its own species without a qualm. On the other hand, contrary to the popular belief and notion, the wolf will not finally kill another wolf in battle if the loser asks for clemency by baring its neck. Here is material for thought for him who deludes himself with the escapist hope that there is greater safety with the ahimsa-peddler than with the other who declares, "get converted or be killed", a stupid notion that bedeviled the Sikh leadership in 1947, and rendered them incapable of comprehending the true significance and

implications of the British withdrawal from India and the consequences thereof for the Sikhs.

40. The patterns of behaviour in the present still have roots in those of the past and thus to understand man one must understand his past, that is, an analysis of animals and men, particularly those who deem themselves as so clever as competent to find their way about in life without taking refuge in the revealed guidance, that is the Guru : *Nānak gurū na cetani man apne sucet*⁴ as the Sikh scripture puts it.

41. *Rāj karegā Khālsā ākī rahe na koe, khwār hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe*, is not only a divinely revealed truth but a well-established scientific fact, Lorenz, Andrey and Morris have not picked up their theories from the air. They belong to an insistent, prestigious tradition of Western speculation and Scientific inquiries that stretches back to Sigmund Freud, through Spangler to Thomas Hobbs. Spangler in his *Magnum Opus: Decline of the West*, has been virulent about his claims about aggressiveness, "The beast of prey," he says, "is the highest form of active life. The human race ranks highly because it belongs to the class of beasts of prey. Man lives engaged in aggression⁵, killing, annihilation. Man is a beast of prey. I shall say it again and again. The traders in virtue, the champions of social ethics are but beasts of prey with their teeth broken." Spangler's contribution to Nazi ideology was not insignificant.

42. Freud's firm conviction about the aggressive instinct in man is patent in his: *Civilisation and its Discontents*. In it he says : "The truth is that men are not friendly, gentle creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if they are attacked, but that a powerful measure for aggression has to be reckoned with as a part of their instinctual endowment."

43. For Freud, man is not a rational animal but a repressed animal : Civilisation, suppression and neurosis are inevitably associated in such a way that the more civilisation, the more neurosis, the less suppression, the less neurosis

4. *Āsā dī vār. I*

5. *Khālsā so jo kare nit jang —Dasamagranth, Sarbloh .*

and the less civilisation." Thus, it is not in our power to dislodge the greatest of our obstacle to civilisation which is the constitutional tendency in man to aggression."

44. He was obviously unaware of the divine guidance that is the teachings of the Guru, that shows mankind the way out of this patent predicament—the practice of Nām—yoga :

*Kahu nānak ihu tatt bicārā, bin hari bhajan nahīn chhutakārā.*⁶

That human nature can be totally transmuted is a proposition not easily acceptable to Western mind.

45. It is the hatred we suppress and repress with difficulty that remains the main spring of our social life. Man, the aggressive beast of prey is the core-essence of a social *homo sapiens*, and not the lachrymos love-sentiment and gushing pity of the Christian good, and the mercy, *dayā*, of the Hindu *Parameshvar*. Nietzsche was making out a point when he said in his, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* : "God is dead, God is dead. He died of pity." It is a basic misconception of human nature to accord primacy to non-violence, *ahimsā* and to uphold socially uncommitted religion and secular politics, separated from religion. The Sikh idiom of thought made prevalent by Guru Gobind Singh himself to designate the elite man, as the ferocious lion, *Singh*; the king crocodile, *Nihang*, the spread-hooded cobra, *Bhujangi*; the angry snake in the attack-posture, *pecideh mār*,⁷ enshrines the ultimate scientific truth about human nature and destiny and to confuse and mislead the Sikhs on this point as the Patiala — performance of Bhai Jodh Singh seeks to do, is infamous and indefensible altogether.

46. Freud's theories and the scientific insights now provided by Ethology are generally accepted as supporting the scientific view that war, the highest political activity, is inevitable and necessary and desirable for human weal. Bertrand Russel gave him support by arguing that it was "only the external enemy which supplied the cohesive force of Society, so that a

6. *Āsā I.*

7. *Ciha shud kih tū kushtehee bacceh cār, kih bāqi bimānd ast pacideh mār -Zafarnāme.*

World-state, if it were firmly established, would have no enemies to fear and would, therefore, be in danger of breaking down through lack of cohesive force."

47. Did not Confucius declare two thousand years ago that, "a country that has no external enemies is doomed?"⁸

48. Aggressiveness, war, then is a natural quality of human psyche and the Sikh doctrine of *rāj karegā Khālsā* is a sane, scientific doctrine and legitimate religious aspiration and to attempt to wean the Sikhs, away from it, is a crime against sanity and Science, Religion and God. To exhort Sikhs to insulate religion from politics and to fall into the fatal error of believing in possibility of a full and genuine religious life without a base of political autonomy and a fulcrum of political power, is an utterly mean, unforgivable thing to do.

49. The Sikh doctrine of '*rāj karegā Khālsā*' is useful socially and necessary if society is to hold together. Since to-day war has become so dangerous to indulge in on a massive scale, Lorenz speaks of how we suffer "an insufficient discharge of the aggressive drive." Desmond Morris is hopelessly pessimistic in relation to any optimism expressed as to our ability to remould our way of life:

"Control our aggressive and territorial feelings and dominate all our basic urges, I submit that, this is rubbish. Our raw animal nature will never permit this."

"Permanent peace", "progressive prosperity", "classless Society", "secular Politics", "a private personal religion", "insulation of religion from politics" are just popycock or psychodelic, utopian dreams. Only rarely are there periods of World-peace with minor skirmishes, as during the Pax Romana (27 B.C.-A.D. 180) and the hundred years of Pax Britannica (1814-1914).

50. There is no higher truth and more reliable guidance available to mankind than the principles embedded in and implicated by the words, spoken by the blessed mouth' of Guru Gobind Singh :

*Rāj karegā Khālsā ākī rahe na koe,
Khwār hoe sabh milenge bace saran jo hoe.*



THE ESSENTIALS OF SIKHISM

Religion deals essentially with three subjects of the nature of reality, the nature of man and its relation to this reality, and lastly with the way to reach this reality. The first two subjects belong to philosophy proper and it is the third subject which brings the other two also into the domain of religion. As long as religion merely defines the nature of reality and seeks to lay down the true values of human activity, it is no more than philosophy and ethics, but when it seeks and promises to help human soul to take these truths to heart and to put them into action with the object of resolving the problem of suffering which is inherent in the innermost core of man, the self-consciousness, then it becomes religion proper. Man can possibly, keep his mind away from the intellectual problems of the mystery of universe, the nature of his own self and that of the world around him and the nature of the relationship that binds both, but he cannot help yearning and suffering. As Pascal has said, "Man is the only wretched creature that there is," and a religion which did not whole-heartedly tackle this problem would ring hollow. In this sense, Buddhism was eminently right when it declared that the basic problem, demanding resolution of religion is '*sab dukkha*' i.e. that all individuated conscious existence entails sufferings which means that suffering inheres in the very nature of the human individuality.

Sikhism is essentially a Religion of the Way i.e., something that must be lived and experienced rather than something which may be intellectually grasped and comprehended. True, there can be no practice without the doctrine. Sikhism, therefore, has its doctrines, its view of reality, its view of the nature of man, and their interrelationship, but it lays primary stress on the practice, the discipline "the way which leads to the cessation of suffering", as Gautam, the Buddha, had formulated it.

A careful reading and understanding of the contents of the Sikh Scripture shows that the religion of Sikhism has three postulates implicit in its teachings. One, that there is no essential duality between the spirit and the

matter.¹ Two, that man alone has the capacity to enter into conscious participation in the process of the evolution, which further implicates that the process of evolution as understood by the modern man, has come to a dead-end and it, therefore, must be rescued by the conscious effort of man who alone is capable now of furthering this process.² Three, that when the man reaches the highest goal of evolution, namely, the vision of God, he must not be absorbed back into God of voidness but must remain earth-conscious so as to transform this mundane world into a higher and spiritual mode of existence. *Brahmgyani paropkar omaha.*³

The first of these propositions is a postulate of Philosophy though in the context of Philosophic speculations of the world, it is startling enough. The view taken by Sikhism on this point is that the spirit and the matter are not antagonistic to each other, the one subtle, the other gross, and that the core of the human nature, which is self-conscious, and the physical nature, are accountable ultimately in terms of the subtle. The mathematico-physical aspect of the universe is as real as its subtle aspect is, though to a mode of consciousness which is pinpointed and individuated, they appear to be poles apart. A true comprehension however, which results from the religious discipline of sublimating and integrating the human faculties, removes this basic duality between the mind and the matter. "When I say truly, I knew that all was primeval. Nanak : the subtle and the gross are in fact identicalo."⁴ This assertion is repeated in the Sikh Scripture again and again in exegesis of the basic formula of Sikhism given as the opening line of the Sikh Scripture in which it is postulated that, "the Primary is true, the pre-Tempral is true, the Phenomena, is true, and also the yet-to-be-evolved is true."⁵ This view of reality, which Sikhism postulates, has far-reaching implications, both in respect of the traditional Hindu Philosophy, and the problem of the true conduct for man. Firstly, it in essence, repudiates the basic concept of Hindu thought embodied in the doctrine of *Maya*, which is postulated as the illusory power which createth appearances and ignorance. True, the subtle Hindu mind characterises it as *anirvachniya*, "unsayable whether is, or is not", "real

1. *Sargun aap, nirgun bhi oh,* -*Sukhmani*, V.

2. *Kai Janam bhaie kit patanga... Mil jagdis, milan ki baria.* -*Gauri*, V.

3. *Sukhmani* V.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Japu*, 1.

yet not-real", but it definitely is a veiling, obscuring Power of nature, and an agent of error and illusion, accountable for the manifestation of all phenomena. In Sikhism, the term, *Maya*, is retained but it is interpreted otherwise so as to make it not a category of existence, but a characteristic of a stage and plane in the involution of the spirit. The result of this re-interpretation is replete with tremendous consequences for the practical outlook of man. The world of phenomena is no longer a dream and a phantasmagoria in the minds of the gods, to be by-passed and shunned. It is as real, in fact, as Ultimate Reality, but the perceiving human mind is beset with limitations that must be transcended and cut asunder before it can be seen thus. It is this that made it possible for Sikhism to lay down that the highest religious discipline must be practised while remaining active in the socio-political context, and not by giving up and renouncing the worldly life. It is this which has given the Sikh mind a sense of urgency, and imparted to it a genuine strain of extroversion which the Western mind has achieved only through adopting basically different postulates, such as, that this one life on earth is the only life a soul may look forward to till the end of time, and that the essence of the real is its characteristic of being the object of sensory-motor perception. It is the peculiar virtue of Sikhism that while it retains the primacy of the spirit over the matter, it prevents human life degenerating into the purely secular, utilitarian and expedient modes of activity. It is a further virtue of this postulate of Sikh religion that it lends the necessary sense of urgency to the mind of man⁶, and imparts to it an extrovert motivation, in so far as it is essential to retain them for human welfare, material prosperity and spiritual advancement on this earth.

The second postulate inherent in the teachings of Sikhism is, that the blind urge of evolution, after reaching the point of creating the self-conscious man, has come to a dead-end and by itself now it is incapable of making any further progress, unless the self-consciousness, in which is grounded the will of man, now takes a consciously guided and directed part to goad the evolutionary urge and guide it. "Hail the Guru, for, he teaches and aids the ascent of man over himself."⁷ This line of thought, in various forms, runs throughout the voluminous Sikh Scripture, and it is legitimate to say that the concept of the

6. *Kal karanta abhi kar - Sloku, Kabir.*

7. *Var Asa, 1.*

'superman', which agitated the mind of Nietzsche during the 19th century in Europe, and from whom the modern Indian thinker, Aurovindo Ghose, has taken his cue, is first of all and truly adumbrated in the Sikh Scripture; and that the conscious effort of man alone is at this stage, capable of furthering the process of evolution that has gone so far to make and shape the material and human world, is now more or less accepted by the thinking modern minds.

But by far the most startling postulate of Sikhism is that the true end of man is not such a vision of God which culminates in re-absorption of the individual into the absolute reality, but the emergence of a race of God-conscious men, who remain earth-aware and thus operate in the mundane world of the phenomena, with the object of transforming and spiritualizing it into a higher and more abundant plane of existence. "The God-conscious man is animated with an intense desire to do good in this world."⁸ In the past the aim of the highest religious discipline was taken and accepted as the attainment of identity with or propinquity to God. It was not thought in terms of utilising the God-consciousness for transforming and spiritualizing the life on earth, and the humanity. It is this revolutionary postulate of Sikhism which is the true prototype of the sophisticated philosophy of the modern Hindu sage, Aurovindo Ghose, though there is no concrete evidence to suggest that he is directly indebted to the Sikh thought. Those, however, who know how basic and revolutionary postulates of this kind are capable of influencing men and minds, far separated by distance and time from the original epiphany of the doctrine, may perceive no difficulty in seeing the connection between the two. In this connection, it is interesting to recall that not long ago, when Ramakrishana, *Paramhansa*, the modern Hindu savant, was at his most critical stage of theophanic development, it was a Sikh ascetic, Udasi Totapuri, who imparted to the *Paramhansa* the Sikh esoteric instruction efficacious for removing impediments on the spiritual path, and that is why the most illustrious *Chela* of the *Paramhansa*, Swami Vivekanand, so often uttered and introduced into his writings, the Sikh mystic formula, *Waheguru*. Again, the Maratha upsurge of the 18th century, the pride and symbol of the political consciousness and self-respect of the modern Hindu nationalism, is admitted as having been directly inspired and nourished by the teachings of Ramdas *Samarth*, the spiritual guide of the great Sivaji, and it is a true though

obscure fact of history that Ramdas *Samarth* is directly indebted to the Sikh teachings as imparted to him when he met the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind, in Kashmir, in 1634. As the Gurumukhi manuscript (Khalsa College Library, Amritsar 1780 Cirsa), *Pothi Punjab Sakhian* accounts, the Guru taught the Maratha saint that the Essence of Sikhism is to be an ascetic within and secular without, for Guru Nanak taught mankind to transcend the little ego and the appearances and not to renounce the world, whereupon the Maratha saint exclaimed: "This appeals to my mind."⁹ The inspirer and preceptor of the founder of the Arya Samaj, Vrijanand, a high-caste Brahmin, native of Kartarpur in the Punjab, had before settling down at Banaras as a Vedalearned man, imbibed the Sikh declaration that "unless the mankind pays heed to that which is true essence of all *Veda*, namely doctrine of the Name, they shall remain confused and misdirected."¹⁰ Be that as it may the effects of the seminal ideas of Sikhism can be shown to have moulded and shaped the entire history of modern India.

What is the discipline, and the practice which Sikhism recommends as necessary and efficacious for attaining this God-consciousness, and for yoking it to the evolutionary urge for transformation of life and humanity on this earth, and on the plane of mundane existence? It is the doctrine and practice of the Name. "In the age through which humanity is passing now, no other practice but that of the Name is efficacious. Therefore, practice the discipline of Name."¹¹ This message is repeated again and again in the Sikh Scripture. "O, my soul, there is no help but in the Name; other ways and practices are not so sure."¹²

Now, what is this 'discipline of the Name' which Sikhism teaches as the essence of the religion for mankind in the present Age?

In the history of religion, broadly speaking, five paths have been recognised as efficacious for leading to liberation, i.e., for achievement of the *Summum bonus* of religion; (1) disinterested action, known as the *Karamyoga* in Hindu religious thought; (2) devotion, known as *Bhakti*; (3) gnosis, the *Jnan*; (4) the ritual, known as *Yajna*; and (5) asceticism, maceration or *tapas*. This fifth and the last path to liberation is a typical Indian contribution to the

9. *Yeh hamare man bhawti hain.*

10. *Ramkali, Anand III.*

11. *Asa, I.*

12. *Gauri, V.*

history of religious practices. All the other four have been, more or less, universally accepted in some form or other, with varying degrees of stress on each, as valid paths to liberation. In the Sikh Scripture, the first three are variously mentioned and subsumed under the inclusive title, 'the discipline of the Name'. No logically systematic account of the theory or practice of the Name is given in the Sikh Scripture, however, for the idiom of the writings itself forbids such an approach, but throughout its voluminous pages it is stressed again and again with a wealth of metaphor and imagery, illustrative material and exposition, that, at the present stage of mankind the discipline of the Name is the only suitable and efficacious practice for leading to the vision of God and for achieving the unitive experience of the Numenon. The discipline of *Bhakti* and discipline of *Karma*, the dis-interested works, is also mentioned variously, commended and praised but throughout it is tacitly assumed that it is a part and parcel of the generic discipline, "the practice of the Name." The limitation and the sickness in the soul of man can be removed only by mercerising it with the chemical of the Name."¹³ The vision of God is not easier to have by any other endeavour than that of the Name and man engages in this effort only by good fortune, for all the other disciplines and practices pale into insignificance before the practice of the Name."¹⁴ It is asserted that the true knowledge is a fruit of the practice of the Name¹⁵ and that devotion, *Bhakti*, is a corollary of the discipline of the Name.¹⁶ It is further said that disinterested action, the practice to *Karmayoga*, is a natural disposition and propensity of the man in whom the discipline of the Name is ripened. *Prabhu kau simarahi se paropkari.*¹⁷

It is clear, therefore, that Sikhism teaches a religious discipline which is in essence a practice which includes the techniques of Yoga, the psychological and spiritual integration, the technique of *Bhakti*, the supreme training of the emotions in the service of one supreme end, and a socio-politically active life, motivated not by the little ego of the individual but by an individual self which is yoked to the universal Self.

The technique of Yoga has aroused a great deal of interest in the West, and

13. *Japu, I.*

14. *Gauri Sukhmani, V.*

15. *Sukhmani, V.*

16. *Gauri; Thitti, V.*

17. *Sukhmani. V.*

in the modern world during the recent years, but mostly as a technique for achieving mental poise and physical health, though this is not the true purpose of the science of Yoga as originally conceived. The concept of Yoga though, not the term, is as old as the Rig Veda itself. That the Vedic material is complex is recognised in the *Nirukta* itself which takes account of several methods of its exegesis. In recent times, particularly by Western scholars of archaeology, it has been suggested that Vedic material is primarily historical events transmuted into myth. It is said by others that it consists of poetic exordium to the Brahmanic ritual. There is then a theory, recently revived by Sri Aurovindo Ghose, that the Veda is a vast piece of symbolism representing the passions of the soul and its striving for highest spiritual realms, a concept which he himself has adopted as the prototype of his great poem, the *Savitri*. Again, Bergaigne suggested the theory that all mythological portrayals in the Veda are variants of the sacred fire and the sacrificial liquor, the *somal*. Whatever may be said about this last as a general theory of interpretation of the Vedas, it has the merit of suggesting a method which appears to be plausible, for, obscure Vedic texts assume some kind of coherence in general if in them we seek an attempt at portraying correspondences between the world of men, the performers of the *yajna*, and the immaterial ethereal world of the gods, in short the microcosm and the macrocosm. The primary function of the *rishis*, the revealers and preservers of the Veda, was to ensure the ordered functioning of the mundane world, and of the religious ritual, by reproducing the succession of cosmic events, in their ritual and in the imagery which that ritual embodies, and this is the true meaning that the Vedic ritual signified. The term *rita*, the basic concept of Vedic imagery, is a designation of the cosmic order which sustains the human order, the social ethics and the social coherency. Terms such as *dharman*, *kratu*, have a two-fold significance according to whether they refer to men or the gods, to the plane of the adhyatmam or the adhidaivatam, as the Upanishadas point out. Thus understood, the Veda portrays the cosmic magical synthesis, symbolically expressed. The cosmic order is conceived as a vast *yajna*, the prototype of the *yajna* which the men must perform so as to ensure the integration of the two. Thus, Vedism is already a form of collective, communist 'Yoga' in which the gods and men both play their parts as witness and participants. It is this strain of thought which accounts for the yearning of the Hindu mind that constantly seeks

hidden correspondences between things which belong to entirely different conceptual systems. The science and the technique of Yoga, as it has been developed in India for thousands of years, is thus as old as the Hindu thought itself. The term comes from the Sanskrit root, *yuj*, which means to yoke, or join together. As the specific science of spiritual discipline, it is intended to signify the union of the individual self with the universal Self, the vision of God or the absorption into God. As an art, the technique of Yoga has been used, since the beginning of Hindu historical times, as the archaeological discoveries recently made in the Indus Valley Mohenjodaro show, where a big tank surrounded by unventilated cubicles, designed to ensure deoxygenation calculated to alter body chemistry facilitative of introversion, has been unearthed, lending support to the speculation that, already in the MILLENNIA before the dawn of the Christian Era, the art and practice of Yoga was well-developed and well-established. Its techniques and teachings have been accumulated through a continuous stream of adepts who have handed them down from generation to generation. Patanjali, a Hindu savant of the 4th century B.C., is the author of the text, *Yogasutra*, which is now the most ancient text extant on the science of *Yoga*, though its opening *sutra* says, "Now, a revised text of *Yoga*" which makes it clear that this text is, by no means, the first of its kind. The philosophical basis of this system of *Yoga*, an expounded by Patanjali, is the *Sankhya* which teaches that the world order is risen and is an expansion of the highest kind of Intelligence, the *Mahat*; that there is no part without an assignable function, a value, a purpose; that there is always an exact selection of means for the production of definite ends; that there is never a random aggregation of events; that there is order, regulation and system. It postulates two ultimate realities, the Spirit and the Matter, the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti*, to account for all experience, as logical principles out of which all things evolve. The fundamental tenet of the *Sankhya* is that creation is impossible, for something cannot come out of nothing *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and that the real movement therefore only consists of modification. This is the central doctrine of the *Sankhya*, and is called, *satkarya vada*, (*Sankhya Karika*, 9) and its whole system evolves from this as its logical ground. The *Sankhya* divides this process of cosmic modification into 25 categories of mind and matter and shows how the whole phenomena has evolved out of these two sources in accordance with these categories. The

Philosophy of orthodox *Yoga* postulates that what is true of this macrocosm is also true of the human microcosm and that, as the individual soul has involuted, through a set process, out of the universal Spirit, it can, by the reverse process, evolve into the universal Spirit. The *Yoga* assumes that the individual soul is the part and parcel of the universal Substance, but so involved in the context of Time and Space as to have lost all recognition of its true nature. The *Yoga* sets forth a know how and a technique to bring the individual back to his own and original position, to absolve him from the clutches of matter and to return to the essence from which he came, and thus to abstract him from every aspect of Time and Space.

Since Sikhism abolishes the duality of mind and matter, it, by implication, refuses to base the philosophy of its discipline of the Name on the orthodox categories of the *Sankhya*. The Sikh doctrine of the Name does not assume the traditional cosmological theory as set forth in the *Sankhya* system but it does assert that the basic sickness of the human soul arises out of its individuation, its involution and descent from the universal Spirit, and that the cure and health lies in a process of evolution towards its primal source, which is God¹⁸. For this it recommends a psychological technique, the first step and ingredient of which is the mechanical repetition of the Name of God accompanied by a constant and unceasing effort to empty the individual mind of all its sensory and ideational contents, conscious as well as sub-conscious¹⁹. Since Sikhism recommends that religion must be lived and practised in the socio-political context, it has modelled this practice of the *Yoga* of the Name so as to make it possible and practicable for a person to pursue this discipline simultaneously while engaged in earning honest livelihood. The complicated technique of *Yoga*, as laid down in the text of Patanjali, and the philosophical concepts by which it is validated, both go together and the earning of livelihood and this practice of the *Yoga*, as it is explicitly laid down, cannot go together. In Sikhism, this predicament has been transcended by evolving a technique which is at once practicable and efficacious. This practice of the Name is mechanical to start with, but has its dynamic adjuncts, without which it cannot succeed. The first adjunct is the ethical life. The Sikh Scripture lays constant

18. *Nij ghar mahil pavaho sukh sahije*, —Gauri, V.

19. *Ram ram, sabh ko kahai, kahiai, Ram na hoe, Gurparsadi nam vasai, tan phal pavai koe*. —Gujri, III.

stress on it that unless a man leads life he cannot come high unto God, although Sikhism does not confuse the ethical commandment and value with the religious experience and value as such. A Sikh, engaged in the discipline of Name, himself must lead a life of the highest ethical purity, in word, thought and deed, every faltering from this path of rectitude constitutes a stumbling block in the path of his ultimate realisation of God. "A man of religion must be wholly motivated by ethical rules of conduct."²⁰ He is bidden to rely upon prayer and the company of holy men to support and sustain him in his life of ethical rectitude. As he progresses in the path of spiritual realisation, he must deem it as his duty to persuade and help others to tread the same path through socio-political activity which must be progressively purified of all taints of selfishness. This is the doctrine of 'Seva' of Sikhism, without which, the Sikhism declares, the practice of Name does not fructify.

It is further laid down in the Sikh Scripture that the discipline of Name must be constantly vitalised by *Bhakti*, devotion to God. "Increase your devotion to God in an everascending measure so that your mind may be wholly purified."²¹ The word *Bhakt*, has the literal meaning of 'well-joined'. The word, *bhakti*, occurs in the *Svetasvetara*, the ancient Hindu text, which Otto Schrader in his *Der Hinduismus* (Tubingen, 1930, p.1) calls, "the gateway to Hinduism", although the earlier, Panini, in his Grammar, also appears to refer to it (IV.iii. 95-98). It was the *Bhakti* principle which brought about the transition from the neuter, to the personal principle in Hindu religious speculation. Since *Bhakti* is 'joining with' or 'participation' in the God, it presupposes an object distinct from the subject. A purely monistic, such as the Sikh doctrine projects, is not a very fertile ground for *Bhakti*. *Bhakti*, therefore, has always been better adapted to a *Vaisnave* background wherein a personal God is postulated as assuming human and sub-human forms in the phenomenal world. The orthodox Hindu theory of *Bhakti* is that, a God without attributes is inaccessible, and that, there must be an intercessor. Since Hinduism has no founder or prophet God-incarnate, the 'Word made flesh', as the Christians say, this intermediary must be one of the human or sub-human forms of Vishnu, which he has assumed in various Time-cycles of the Creation. This is the basic doctrine of Hindu *Bhakti*, though gradually it has

20. *Sukhmani*, V, 4-24.

21. *Sukhmani*, V.

acquired many shades of secondary meanings. Since Sikhism does not countenance *avtarvad*, the doctrine of incarnation of gods or the God, it uses the term, *Bhakti*, in its pristine sense of canalizing and sublimating the whole emotive energy of the individual to sustain the continuous yearning for a vision of God.²² This form of *Bhakti*, the Sikh Scripture declares, is necessary adjunct of the discipline of Name *Gur man mario kar sanjog, ahinis ravai bhagat jog*.²³

The last adjunct of the discipline of Name, the Sikh Scripture says, is the intuitive understanding of the philosophical truths which underline the world of phenomena.

This is the true knowledge, the gnosis, and the Sikh Scripture commends that a Sikh must always strive by study; by discussion, by meditation and by every mental effort, to acquire an intellectual and intuitive understanding of the scientific and philosophic truths.²⁴

This, in short outline, is the discipline of the Name which Sikhism teaches as the path to the realisation of the God, and, broadly speaking, it consists of a synthesis of the three well-known paths to liberation recognised in the religions of the mankind, namely, the dis-interested action, the path of devotion, and the path of knowledge, all subsumed under and practised as adjuncts to the grand discipline of the psychological technique of the *Namayoga*. The modern Hindu thinker, Aurovindo Ghose, in his own way, has tried to expound something similar under the title of 'Integral Yoga', though it is definitely something less but expressed in a more sophisticated and modern literary style.

It is, therefore, this discipline of the Name through which Sikhism seeks not only to ensure the continuous renewal but a firm conservancy of the fundamental traditions of the great religions of the mankind and, in addition, it thereby seeks to discover new experiences so as to apply them for the purpose of a new integration of human personality, such as would transform the man and his destiny on this earth.

Out of the five paths to liberation, generally followed by making, the two, namely, the ritual and the maceration, have not been recommended and

22. *Majh, Astpadi, III.*

23. *Basant, I.*

24. *Man karhala vadbhagia, tu gian ratan samal. —Gauri, Astpadi, IV.*

approved of by Sikhism, for obvious reasons. The ritual, in its original essence, is magic and its nature and function is different from that of true religion as conceived by Sikhism. Magic seeks to control powers of nature directly through the force of spells and enchantments, while religion recognises existence of spiritual beings external to man and the world and employs persuasive methods of sacrifice and prayer to procure their aid. Magic is coercive and dictatorial in approach while the other is persuasive. Magic depends upon the way in which certain things are said and done for a particular purpose by those who possess the necessary technique and the power to put the supernatural forces into effect, while religion is personal and supplicatory. It is for this reason that the path of the ritual and the *yajna* has been discountenanced by Sikhism.

Asceticism and maceration have been like-wise dis-owned as desirable paths to liberation²⁵, for, these practices necessarily implicate withdrawal from socio-political activity, and Sikhism firmly discourages such a withdrawal in view of its basic doctrines which envisage an ultimate transformation of the man and his destiny on this mundane earth as the fruit of the religion. A true religious, therefore, must not macerate and 'burn away' his physical frame through excessive *tapas*, but must keep it in disciplined health. "Nanak says, the proper course for man is to seek communion with God by keeping his corporeal frame disciplined and fit."²⁶

The order of the Khalsa, which the *Tenth Nanak*, Guru Gobind Singh, founded, must be viewed in the background of these doctrines of Sikhism, as intended to be a body of men who not only practise the essential spiritual discipline of Sikhism in the sense explained above, but who are also pledged to ensure, by every legitimate means, the coming into existence, the expansion, and the preservation of a world Society, vitalised continuously by the afflation of the truths of religion, which religion is a fluence of all the best traditions of mankind and which religion sustains a world culture in which all traditions of all races of mankind, such as are consistent with the spiritual dignity and the spiritual goal of man, can participate on equal terms.

25. *Yajna, hom, punn, tap, dehi dukhi nit dukh sahai*, - Bhairav, I.

26. *Gujri*, I.

II

THE SIKH THOUGHT

The basic problems of Sikh thought are naturally the same as those of other world religions, and as may be expected, their treatment by Sikhism is, in the main, on the lines of the Hindu and Buddhist speculative thought. Wherever Sikhism differs or departs from these lines of thought, it does so, as a rule, not by introducing new terms or concepts but by underlining an already familiar concept or by amplifying or interpreting it otherwise. This is, as it should be, for, thus alone it is possible to effect a genuine new advance or expansion in the cultural and religious horizon of mankind and it is thus that all great cultures and civilization have emerged and developed.

THE UNIVERSE

We have already said that, in Sikh thought, the final duality between the matter and the spirit is denied. The basic Sikh thought is strictly monistic, "From One the Many emanate and finally into the One the Many submerge."²⁷ All that exists, whether in the form of phenomena and appearances, or as numeron and reality, is, in ultimate comprehension, the Spirit and the mind. The individual mind, the numerous forms of life, and the inanimate matter are all Spirit in different modes. Out of the own initiative of the Spirit a process of involutions occurred for some limited purpose, the precise nature of which is beyond human comprehension. The creation of the universe in its initial form, which the modern theorists, such as Abbe Lamatre (1904----) call, the Primaeval Atom, resulted from the involutionary impulse of God. In this Primaeval Atom was originally concentrated, in a super-dense state, that which expanded and disintegrated, through an antithetical evolutionary impulse, for thousands of millions of years, finally into the universe as it is today. This evolutionary impulse, whereby the Primaeval Atom has issued into the innumerable forms constituting the universe, has reached its highest point, up-to-date, in the creation of man, and man, therefore is the point in creation from where the inverse movement of evolution may take a further leap towards the Spirit. These two processes of involution and evolution constitute a double but simultaneous movement and thus creation of the universe is an involution-cum-evolution process, a descent and an ascent. The

27. *Majh*, V.

universe, thus, is nothing but God in becoming. "The formless has become all the innumerable forms, Himself. Nanak declares the doctrine of the One Being, for, the One indeed is the Many."²⁸

The main doctrines of Sikh theology are grounded in this view of the Ultimate Reality and its nature.

GENESIS

With regard to the coming into being of the Primaeval Atom, the Sikh doctrine is that the process was instantaneous, caused by the Will of God. "The forms become in consequence of the Divine Will. Comprehesion fails at this stage of understanding the Divine Will."²⁹ After thus stating this beginning of the becoming, the further statements made in the Sikh Scripture about the creation and evolution of the universe are remarkably akin to the picture which has now been adumbrated by modern speculation after taking into account the data revealed by the recent advances in observational Astronomy. One of the basic hymns in the Sikh Scripture which may be called the Hymn of the Genesis, says :

"For thousands and thousands of ages and for millions of aeons, there was nothing in the beginning but nebulous density.

Neither solids, nor spaces were there; only the Divine Impulse made become.

Neither the day nor night, neither glaxies and solar systems nor satellites but only God, self-absorbed.

The atmospheres, the imprimis waters, the pre-conditions of all forms of life,

And the sound, the protyle of all becoming, they too were not there.

There were no higher planes, middle regions or lower spaces, for, the space as yet was not there; and there was no all-consuming Time either:

When God Willed, He created the universes.

The expanse was caused without a formal cause.

None knoweth His limits or limitlessness.

The True Teacher revealeth this secret.³⁰

28. Gauri, Bawanakhri, V.

29. Japu, I.

30. Maru, Sohile, I, 3-15.

MAN

The man being the highest yet point in the process of creation on the phenomenal plane, where the evolutionary impulse has apparently near-exhausted its initial momentum, it is man on whom now the responsibility rests for consciously revitalising this impulse for a further evolutionary leap. "Thou art the very essence of God. Therefore, know thyself as such."³¹ "The human body is the resting point of the process of creation and it is from here that the further upward movement towards the God-realisation starts. Therefore, now make an *all-out* effort to reach the Goal and do not waste human life in frivolities."³² It is the involution-cumevolution which is responsible for the creation of the universe, and which after reaching the point of human consciousness has reached a stasis and the man is thus a voluntary diminution of the infinitude of God, for some obscure but limited purpose, as, indeed all forms of existence represent a diminution of God. Since God is truth, knowledge, bliss, light, harmony and immortality, the involuted forms of creation are, so much less of all these. Man being the stage at which the evolution has emerged into self-consciousness, man is capable of knowing that he has reached a particular stage of the creative process, and he is capable, volitionally, of taking steps to evolve upwards to the next stage. This is the stage of the *Brahmajnani*, or the God-conscious man, and it is to this stage of evolution, a vague and distorted premonition of which finds expression in the later 18th and early 19th century West European literature in the form of the concept of the Superman. 'Lo, I preach to you the Superman; Superman is the meaning of the earth", said Nietzsche. Again, "Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman.... What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal." Sikhism agrees with this except that Sikhism declares that the meaning of the earth reaches far beyond the stage of this 'Superman' and Superman as conceived thus is not only an inadequate and distorted concept, but is merely an interim stage. Sikhism endorses Nietzsche that the sphere of the activity of the Superman, and of the still higher stages of the evolution, is the earth, in the sense that it is on this earth, and other similar terrestrial spheres that a perfect human society of God-conscious men, of psycho-social perfection, is the ultimate objective of the impulse of God

31. *Man tu jot sarup hai, apna mul pachhan* —Asa, III, 3. Asa, V.

32. *Thus spake Zarathustra I.4.*

which has originally given rise to the process of creation. In contra-distinction to all those and previous philosophies and religions, which taught that the ultimate goal of man was either absorption into God or entry into a supramundane Kingdom of God, wherein there is abiding propinquity to God. Sikhism urges man to divinise the whole of humanity on this earth by transforming mind, life and matter, through a conscious effort and will and with the aid of the spiritual technique of the *Namyoga*, which is capable of transforming the mental, vital and material stuff, of which the man is made, into a subtler, finer and nobler substance capable of taking along the whole being to a level of existence, undreamed of before, where pure knowledge, full harmony and divine bliss would prevail. This, indeed, would be a society of gods, and the ultimate purpose of the divine impulse of creation in the establishment of this Society of human gods in the terrestrial spheres of the universe. It is the teachings of the Sikh Gurus that the supreme duty of man is to make an all-out effort towards this divine goal, and the Sikh Gurus not only point out this goal but also reveal the way towards it. "Hail, the Guru, a hundred thousands times, hail, for, he reveals the secret of emergent transformation of man into gods."³³

GOD

The Sikh concept of the ultimate Reality is more akin to the Judaic notion of an Almighty Person than to the Aryan concept of an immanent neutral Principle. The basic formula of Sikh theology is the opening line of the Sikh Scripture which characterises the ultimate Reality as follows:

"I, Being-Becoming, Truth, Numenon, Creator, Person, Non-thesis, Non-antithesis, Beyond Times, Form, Unborn, Self-expression, Light, Gracious."

MAYA

The doctrine of *Maya* has been basic to the Hindu and Buddhist speculation from the very beginning. The best known work, apart from the omniscient, *Mahabhart*, in which the term, *Maya* (relative truth), is employed as a philosophical concept, is the metrical treatise, *Karika*, by Gaudpad, wherein, unlike the *Mahabhart* (*Bhagvadgita*, XVIII, 61) the term is not taken for granted but is explained and defined. Since the proper name of

33. *Var Asa, I.*

Gaudpad was borne by the teacher of the famous philosopher of Hindu monism, Shankara, the author of the *Karika* may be the same person who might have lived at the end of 7th century. This work, *Karika*, is usually printed with the *Mandukaya-Upanishad*, and for practical purposes, is regarded a part of it. In language and thought both, it bears a remarkable resemblance to Buddhist writings of the *Madhyamik School*, and the criticism of Hindu orthodoxy that 'the monism of Shankara, in which the doctrines of *Maya* is embedded, is, in reality, crypto-Buddhism,'³⁴ is not without substance. In the *Karika*, the world of appearances is compared to the apparent circle of fire produced by whirling lighted torch. This striking image first occurs in the *Maitrayana Upanishda* (vi.24). It also occurs in the Buddhist Mahayan scripture, the *Lankavtarsutra*, which purports to be an account of the revelation of the true Religion by Gautama, the Buddha, when he visited Ceylon and there gave discourses to the King of the Island, Ravana and his wife, Mahamati. This text represents a well-matured phase of speculation in Buddhism, as it criticises the Hindu School of Philosophy of the Sankhaya, Pashupat, as well as other Schools. It includes a prophecy about the birth of Nagarjuna, the great Buddhist savant of the 4th century A.D., and it mentions the advent of Guptas which marks the renaissance of Hinduism in India. It also alludes to fresh incursions of the Hunas into northern India, which incursions destroyed the Imperial Gupta dynasty at the end of the 5th century A.D. Throughout the Hindu speculative and religious literature, ever since, this doctrine of *Maya* is admitted as, in some way, an independent principle of the process of creation. True the subtle Sankra asserts that the principle of *Maya* is *anirvachaniya*, that is, it can neither be said to exist nor not to exist. A is neither A, nor not-A. Whatever else this statement may mean, it does implicate that *Maya* has a positive existence. Sikhism denies the doctrine of *Maya*, thus conceived. As ignorance and nescience have no positive existence, they merely being the aspects of the self-limited involuted Spirit, likewise. *Maya*, as such, has no positive existence. It is merely a way of saying that the individual consciousness perceives the reality only in the form of partial knowledge, which is so on account of the process of involution. As the darkness is merely a negative aspect of the light of the Sun, similar is the case with ignorance and nescience.

34. *Maya-vadam asachhastram, prachhannam Baudham-(Vaisava) Padem-Purana.*

"What is there positive to which we can give the name of *Maya*? What positive activity the *Maya* is capable of? The human soul is subject to the pleasure and pain principle in its very nature as long as it operates on the individuated plan of consciousness."³⁵

This interpretation of the concept of *Maya* in Sikh theology has far-reaching consequences in so far as it pulls the Hindu mind out of the slough of much indolent introspective pre-occupation and subjectivism, generated by the belief that the whole world of the appearances in which man is born to pursue his socio-political life, is no more real than a phantasmagoria in the minds of the gods above. By giving a foundation of solid reality to the world of appearances, this re-interpretation of the concept of *Maya* confers a sense of reality, a feeling of urgency and an objectivity to the whole frame of mind, which is necessary for the all-out effort to speed up the evolutionary process, through the human will, and this is the core of the precepts of Sikhism, as a way of life.

ETHICS

The fact that religious experience, *per se*, is non-moral, has been known to Hindu thought from the very beginning. In the West, it has been recognised clearly only in recent times. It was Dr. Otto who in his *Idea of the Holy*, about a quarter of a century ago, made this point finally clear. In the Judaic religious tradition, for all practical purposes, religious life and ethical conduct appear to have been identified. The ten commandments of Moses are ethical precepts. In the Koran, it is these ethical commands which are presented as the essence of religion. Western scholars are sometimes shocked at the stories narrated and adored in the ancient Hindu texts, of the deeds of gods which do not conform with strict ethical standards and about which the narrator of the story expresses no moral horror and passes no censorial judgement. From this, the Western reader erroneously concludes that, ethics has no place in the Hindu religious practice and tradition. This is far from the truth. From the very beginning, in the Hindu thought and tradition it has been recognised that ethical conduct is the very foundation on which the life of a religious man must be based. The rule of conduct of the Buddhist sramans, the formulary of conduct of the Jain *bhikshus*, the daily rules made obligatory for Brahmin in

35. *Srirag, Astpadi, III.*

almost all basic Hindu texts, bear ample testimony to the fact that the relation of ethics to religion has always been considered as intimate by the Hindus. It is true that the Hindu thought recognises that the man of highest religious experience is, like the Superman of Nietzsche, beyond good and evil, but that is not to say that in Hindu tradition the ethical values have no place in religious life. In Sikhism, while it is recognised that the highest religious experience is unmoral and belongs to a category of value which is not ethical, it is nevertheless stressed that without strict ethical purity of conduct there is no possibility of any advance in the religious experience. A religious life, not strictly grounded in ethical conduct, or a religious discipline which ignores the ethical requirements, is considered in Sikhism a great error. "The seed of the testament of the Guru cannot germinate except in the field of ethical conduct, constantly irrigated by the waters of truth."³⁶ "A man of religion is ever characterised by ethical deeds, honest living, sincerity of heart, and a fearless passion for truth."³⁷ "Nanak maketh this public declaration, let all men ponder over it. Ethical conduct is the only true foundation of human life on earth."³⁸ Sikhism, thus, lays a stress on morality which raises the moral law to a high status which was not generally countenanced by the Hindus and Buddhists. The Buddhist and Brahmanic systems appear to assume tacitly that morality is a means to felicity and it is not obedience to a law which exists in its own right as demanding obedience, what Immanuel Kant calls, the Categorical Imperative. It is true and by them moral conduct is regarded as governed by the cosmic law, called, the law of *Karma*, which means that good deeds bring good results and evil deeds bring evil results, Sikhism, however, raises ethical conduct to a higher and more sovereign status, and makes it as the true expression of the harmony of human personality with the Will of God. All ethical conduct, therefore, is not merely conducive to good results such as, happiness, but it is, primarily, an act of establishment of concord between the human personality and the person of God. Since this concord is the highest end and the goal of human existence and endeavour, it is, therefore, the basic ingredient of the highest activity of man which is religion. Thus, Sikhism, while recognising that the order of Reality which is revealed as numenon to

36. *Srirag, I.*

37. *Gauri Sukhmani, V.*

38. *Soreth, I.*

the human experience is not identical with the category of ethical experience, it unequivocally emphasizes that the two cannot be divorced or separated and that the nature of the numenon is such that its realisation is impossible without ethical conduct.

In this way, the Sikh thought fuses the Hindu thought and the semitic tradition on the subject of ethics and religion.

FREE WILL

European philosophy and theology have been much exercised over the subject of the free will, while the Hindu tradition has considered this topic as of minor importance. The explanation for this lies in their analytical understanding of the concept. In European thought, an individual is conceived of as a permanent fixed entity, basically separate from the rest of the world which is his universe. It is argued that, without freedom of will there is no moral responsibility, and if there is no moral responsibility, there can neither be guilt nor punishment, either in society, or hereafter, before the throne of God. This problem has not much troubled the Hindu mind, for two reasons. In the first place, the Hindu thought rightly considers that there is no such thing as a completely independent and stable entity, called the individual, and secondly, the Hindu argues, and quite rightly, that if the human will is not free then what does the term 'freedom' mean? What instance shall we bring forth with which to contrast the supposed determination of the human will? Our notion of 'freedom', is alienably derived from our own experience to which we give the name of 'will' whatever, therefore, we may mean by 'freedom' it is ultimately in the terms of our experience of our own will, that we give meanings to it. Thus interpreted, to say that human will is free is an axiom and a tautology. There is no meaning in the thesis that human will is not free, for 'free' is that which is like unto the human will. The trouble, however, arises when we give to the expression 'free will', a meaning which we have not derived from any deep analysis of our experience of our will, but which have been superimposed by our intellect. Thus, we like to think that, 'free will' is that power of volition of the human individual which is totally uncaused and unconditioned. A little reflection, however, will show that such a 'freedom' does not, in fact, exist and further, that if it did and could exist, it will destroy all foundations of 'moral responsibility', 'guilt' and justification for

punishment', either here or hereafter. To begin with, there are the facts of heredity, the environment, and the sub-conscious mind. there is not much doubt that the individual is the product of his heredity, the inner mechanism of which the science of biology has partially discovered recently in the fertilized germ-cells and its genes, which make all the organic cells that make up the body, including the brain and the nervous system. This pattern we inherit from our parents and our ancestors, and it is certainly a determination of the choices that we make in our lives from time to time. New Psychology has revealed to us the sub-conscious layers of human mind as the seat of instincts, emotions, and intuitions, accumulated, for those who faithfully follow the dogma of the Church Council of Constantinople (553 A.D.), which anathematised the doctrine of transmigration, in the race pattern during evolution of millions of years or, for those who hold the doctrine of metempsychosis as fundamental, accumulated in the course of millions of previous births and rebirths of the individual. They are certainly a determinant throughout a man's life in the matter of his choice and the conduct that follows it. Again, from outside, the social environment is active in continuously influencing and moulding an individual's mind, and thereby his power of choice and conduct. These three factors, the physical, the environmental, and the hereditary, are there as a fact and their powers of influencing the human powers of choice cannot be denied. In this context, there cannot be a free will, as an uncaused and unconditioned factor which solely determines as to what choice an individual will make. But even if there were such a 'free' will, it will entail disastrous consequences for the science of ethics and the doctrine of moral responsibility. If a man's actions are not free when they can be shown to be causally chained to his character, the sum total of his heredity, past experiences and environment, then the only circumstances in which it would be proper to call a man, 'free' would be those in which he acted independently of his received character, that is, of his habits, desires, urges, and perspective on life and all the rest. But if this agent of 'free' action, is not to be identified with that which is subject to particular desires and urges, which is circumscribed by a given environmental and circumstantial set-up, which is devoid of character, motives, persistent interests and the like, then who is this agent of 'free' choice, the 'he'? Such a notion of 'free' will completely dissolves the agent of action; a person with such a 'free' will is a completely disembodied and unidentifiable entity. Such

an entity can neither be blamed nor praised, nor held responsible for what it does, for it would be clearly unreasonable to hold an individual responsible for his actions if we did not think there was a causal connection between his character and his conduct. When we can show that there is no such connection, as, for instance, that an act is committed as a result of coercion, we do not normally hold him responsible. The reason is not that the one act is 'uncaused', and 'free' while the other is 'determined'. The reason lies in the kind of the cause; in the one case the cause lies in the character of the individual over which he has, in some sense, control, while in the other case he has no such control. As we gain new knowledge about the kinds of causes that affect conduct, we change our mind about the kinds of behaviour for which we should hold men responsible. The recent shifts of stress in the science of Penology in the modern world, and the ancient wisdom of the east and west which iterated that an individual is ultimately responsible for nothing, must be appreciated in the context of this analysis, and not in the superficial frame of reference of determinism' and 'free will'. "A man reaps only that what he sows in the fields of *Karma*"³⁹, declares the Sikh Scripture. It simultaneously asserts that, "Say, what precisely it is that an individual can do out of his free choice? He act the as the God Willeth."⁴⁰ And the Bhagvadgita asserts that, "God sits in the heart of every creature with the consequence that all revolve in their set courses, helplessly, tied to the wheel of *Maya*?"⁴¹ That man is free to choose and act to some extent, and to the extent that he is so, to that extent alone he is morally responsible and subject to praise and blame, is a true statement; that there is no such entity, and no such entity is conceivable, which is wholly 'uncaused' and 'undertermined', and further that in the ultimate analysis, the whole area of individuality can be shown to be linked to a penumbral cause or complex of causes which are supra-individual is also a true statement, and these two true statements are not self-contradictory or incompatible with each others constitutes the Sikh doctrine on the subject.

This brings us back to our immediate experience that seems to carry its own certitude with it, that in some sense we are free, we have the notion of freedom as the core of this experience. Sikhism, while implicitly taking note

39. *Baramaha, Majh, V.*

40. *Gauri Sukhmani, V.*

41. *Bhagvadgita, XVIII-61.*

of the three factors, and the ultimate factor out of which they stem out, which determine the powers of human choice, lays pragmatic stress on this fourth factor, perpetually present and operative in the human mind, which is the autonomous power of choice. This autonomous power of choice is the divinity in man, according to Sikhism, and it is this core around which the whole human personality is constructed. It is this central core of the human personality which is at the heart of the individual consciousness and it is, therefore, 'the source of all human misery, as well as the panacea of all his ills.'⁴² "How shall man demolish the pall of nescience that separates him from God? By being in tune with the Will of God. And how shall we know the Will of God? Nanak answers : It is embedded in the very core of human personality."⁴³

It is this autonomous power of free choice which is endowed the other three observable determining factors of human choice are interfused and, thus, the act of free human choice gives birth to a new event which is not wholly determined, and which is not a mere combination and aggregation of all these four factors but giving rise to other similar events in the future. It is this power of free choice that is included in man's heritage which has the capacity to go beyond this heritage and, thus, within the limits given, a human being is free to shape his own destiny. Nor are the other factors, his received character, the individual circumstances merely accidental and fortuitously super-imposed upon the individual, for they too are the fruits of his past *Karma*, of many previous births and, thus, are self-determined, result of free choices made. When and why did an individual make the first free but wrong choice? This question relates to the First Things, and therefore, ex hypothesi, the individual comprehension fails at this point for, "the son knoweth not the birth of his father."⁴⁴

This is view of 'free will' in relation to the doctrine of the *Karma* which Sikhism teaches.

KARMA

The doctrine of *Karma* is not the same as doctrine of pre-destination of

42. *Haumain diragh rog hai, daru bhi is mahi, -Var Asa, I.*

43. *Japu, I.*

44. *Gauri Sukhmani, V.*

Christian theology. *Karma* is, in a sense, fate, not pre-destination, for, within the limits given, and these limits constitute the *Karma* inherited from the previous births, a man is free. This *Karma* is not fate because all the time we are making our own *Karma* and determining the character of our further status and births. The doctrine of *Karma*, as understood in higher Hinduism, and as expounded in Sikhism, merely teaches that our present limitations are traceable to our acts of autonomous choice in our past lives and as such our *Karma* is a source of rewards and punishments which we must enjoy and endure. "Ignorant mind of mine, why blame God, for the good and evil of this life is verily thy own *Karma*."⁴⁵ But this idea differs from the idea of fate, as commonly understood in European thought, in as much as it is not inexorable, for all the time we are making our own *Karma* within a context, the core of which is always free and autonomous.

EVIL

The existence of evil is the main reason, or one of the main reasons, for the existence of religion, and the explanation of evil is chief problem of theologies and religious philosophies. Whether it was God who created evil and whether evil is due to misuse of the gift of free will, are problems which constantly occur and reoccur in almost all religions of the world. The main trend of Hindu thought on this problem is that since the world itself is unreal, the existence of evil in it is not of greater concern to the individual than the world itself. A Hindu would assert that the proper course for the human soul is to seek *mukti*, liberation or unison with God, by renouncing and discarding this vain show of appearances, called the world. The Hindu thus is not very much concerned to prove that evil does not really exist in the world, or to explain why God allows it to exist. Since the world itself is no more than a phantom and an insubstantial dream, the evil itself cannot be of a more enduring substance, and, at any rate, it is of no direct concern to the man of religion: Sikhism cannot and, therefore, does not adopt this view, because Sikhism does not accept the ultimate dichotomy of the matter and the spirit and does not accept as an independent entity, the principle of illusion. i.e. the *Maya*. Since Sikhism postulates that religious activity must be practised in the socio-political context of the world, the problem of evil to it is a very much real problem, as it

45. Gauri Namdev.

is to the European thinker. Sikhism, therefore, returns almost the same answer to the problem of evil which the European pantheist gives, namely, that since God is all things and in all things, the evil is only something which is a partial view of the whole, something which appears as such when not from the due perspective, Sikhism asserts that there is no such thing as the principle of evil, as some theologies postulate, although there are things in this world which are evil. This anti-thesis of evil and good, according to Sikhism, is a necessary characteristic of the process of involution which the spirit is undergoing in the process of creation of the world. Evil and good appear at one stage of this involution-cum-evolution and they disappear when the process of evolution culminates into the unitive experience of God, just as the white ray of light splits into its variegated spectrum while passing through a prism, and again gathers these multichromatic hues into its all-absorbing whiteness, when it becomes itself again. This explanation and statement of the doctrine of evil is laid down almost as many words in the *Sukhmani* of the *Fifth Nanak*, and also at numerous other places in the Sikh Scripture. "When a complete perspective is granted to man, by the grace of God, all evil is seen to melt into its primal source, which is All-Good."⁴⁶

"There is no independent principle of evil in the universe because God is All-Good and nothing, that proceeds from All-Good, can be really evil, and there is naught which proceeds from ought but God."⁴⁷

NUMENON AND SANSAR, OR THE REALITY AND APPEARANCE

Sansar is the principle of change, which determines the world of phenomena, and in Hindu thought and in many other systems of metaphysics, it has been argued that on this account it is unreal. It is presumed as axiomatic that the real must not be infected with change. The basic theological formula of Sikhism, with which the Sikh Scripture opens, is proceeded by the exegetic statement that, "all change, all evolution, all that is characterised by the time-process, is ultimately real."⁴⁸ The numenon, the Order of Reality, which is

46. *Jisai bujhai tisai sabh bhali*, —*Gauri Sukhmani*, V.

47. *Is te hoe so nahi bura, orai kahahu kinai kachhu kara*. —*Sukhmani*, 23-7.

48. *Japu*, I.

revealed to the human mind through gnosis, therefore, is not something which is fundamentally different and away from the phenomenon. That what is altered in the gnosis is not that what really is, but it is the mode of preception and the quality of prehension of the individual, which is transformed, thus revealing the vision of the numenon. It is this very mundane and the material world and the phenomena which is freshly and differently prehended and cognised by the human consciousness, when it is enlarged and purified. Sikhism, therefore, is in agreement with the aphorism of the great Buddhist philosopher, Buddhagosa, who declared that "*Yas - sansaras tan-nirvanam*", that is, "the flux and the Absolute are the same". This world of fleeting appearances of God and as such it is that you see, is, in fact, the true face of God and as such revealed to the consciousness of the emancipated man."⁴⁹

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF SIKHISM

The life story of Guru Nanak, called the *Janamsakhi*, the earliest written record we have of the travels and wanderings of the Guru, records that Guru Nanak summed up the Sikh tenets wherever he went, in the following triple precept:

Kirat Karo, Wand Chhako, Nam Japo.

It means, thou shalt earn thy livelihood by honest creative labour, thou shalt share the fruits of thy labour with thy fellow beings, and, thou shalt practise the Discipline of the Name.

These are rightly regarded as the basic commandments of Sikhism.

We have already explained, in brief, the implications and consequences of the discipline of the Name and its importance for the man of religion. This discipline of the Name, a new synthesized and integrated *Yoga*, is to be practised in the context of socio-political life, in which man does not turn his back on the society, and does not renounce the world. The first two precepts, that of honest productive work, and sharing of its fruits with fellow beings, are to constitute the foundation of the Sikh society, while the remaining third is to vitalise and regenerate it.

Sikhism envisages a time, almost within sight now, when the local

49. *Ramkali, Anand, III.*

heritages of the different historic nations, civilisations, people and religions will have coalesced into a common heritage of the whole human family and Sikhism further declares that neither the natural sciences, nor philosophical intellectual speculations, which integrate the basic concepts of natural sciences into philosophy and metaphysics, can rescue man from his state of inherent limitation and suffering and that the religious discipline of the Name alone can do it. The Second Nanak says that :

*Even if a hundred moons arise and a thousand suns shine,
all this light combined cannot dispel the nescience
with which man is afflicted and which the light of God,
that is the religion, alone can dispel and destroy.*

(Var Asa, I)

The words, 'sun' and 'moon', have been used in this text by the Guru in the idiom which has been set by the *Veda*, for the *Veda's* imprint upon Hindu Aryan mind is permanent and unmistakable, even on those who represent a reaction against Vedism. Vedism is not only a religion, it is even more technique, a technique of learned theologians and inspired poets, vipra, "the quivering ones", and it constitutes also the *Mimansa*, the jurisprudence of the *yajna*, the ritual act. Vedism has also developed a number of secular disciplines, such as phonetics, grammar, astronomy and even rudiments of geometry and law. Nighantu is the oldest lexicon in any Indo-European language and in the Nighantu the words are grouped as series of synonyms. These synonyms, as arranged in the Nighantu are, as a rule, secondary metaphysical acceptations, constituted and arrived at in accordance with the laws of occult equivalences. In the *Veda*, the words employed are multivious, polysignificant and that is why the Vedic idiom is described as *vakrokti*, 'crooked', and for this reason the Nirukta commentary says that, *proksa kamahi devah*, the gods are in love with the cryptic. It is in this sense that the Rig Veda declares that "the moon took birth in the mind and the sun in the eyes (of the Cosmic Man)."⁵⁰ The metaphysical correlation and occult equivalence of moon', then, is mind and that of 'sun', the physical perception, the 'eye'. In the text of Guru Nanak just quoted, the expression 'moon' signifies the

50. *Rig Veda*, X 90-13.

integrating speculations of the mind, which result in philosophy, based on the stuff of the basic concepts and hypotheses of the natural sciences. Likewise, the term 'sun' here means the objective natural sciences the knowledge of which is derived through the sensory motor perceptions and, thus, the text under reference refers to the natural sciences and the systems of metaphysics, as it has been explained above.

In the Semetic Judaic religions, the religion is equated with the law, which is reduced into dead letters of utilitarian ethics Sikhism emphasises that the ethical law is not religion *per se* that the core of the religion is the numenon, sacredness in the sense of non-moral holiness as a category of value, and a state of mind and a spiritual experience, peculiar to religion, but that the ethical law is, in some intimate sense, a necessary adjunct of religious life and a penumbra of the religious experience. It therefore, insists on these three precepts as necessary ingredients of the life of man who would practise religion.

To begin with, therefore, in the society which Sikhism recommends as the pattern for the global society, every individual must enagage himself in honest creative labour. Parasitism, in any shape or form, is not only anti-social, but anti-religious also. Secondly, these precepts of Sikhism ensure that there shall be no exploitation of man by man with capital, that is, the accumulated wealth shall not be employed as an instrument of exploitation. This is a necessary implication of the precept that, the religious man must share the fruits of his labour with his fellow creatures. From this it follows, that Sikhism regards a co-operative society as the only truly religious society.

How is this Sikh co-operative society distinguished from the modern concepts of a socialist society, a welfare society, and a communist society?

The basic element which distinguishes a Sikh co-operative society from all these modern social concepts is grounded in the Sikh concept of the world as the very "form of God". *Hari ka rup*, and the status of the individual as the very microcosm of God, *Jotisa rup*, and an individual therefore, must never be imposed upon or coerced. "If thou wouldst seek God, demolish not the heart of any individual."⁵¹ is a text in the Sikh Scripture. The Tenth Nanak, in one of his hymns, addressing God says, that, "I pray to you, God, for this

purpose, so that I may be imposed upon by no authority external to myself."⁵² Herein lies that which essentially distinguishes a religious co-operative society as conceived by Sikhism, from the modern societies that are grounded in the doctrines of socialism, communism and welfarism.

It sententiously declares that "God Almighty alone is the undisputed King competent to rule over men; all mortals who claim the right to do so are false pretenders."⁵³ While Sikhism is in sympathy with most of the ideas with which it is sought to justify the ideals of these social theories and in fact maintains that the ideal Sikh Society shall be based on these ideas, it is out of sympathy with the evolution and growth of any apparatus which enables a class of men to exploit an individual to suppress and subjugate him in the name of abolishing the exploitation of man by man.

It, therefore, follows that while Sikhism seeks to establish a social pattern and eventually a global society in which the socialist ideas of individual welfare, equality and freedom shall have full application, it is opposed to any development which, in practice and reality, seeks to curtail and destroy the worth and inner autonomy of the individual. It is for this reason, that Sikhism conceives of the religious evolution of man as a necessary and integral prerequisite and condition of its march towards the ideal society.

Sikhism warns against the fallacy out of which this dilemma arises and it uncompromisingly opposes all theories and practices which seek to build a fully happy and prosperous society on merely secular bases.

A possible mis-conception about the Sikh notions on the subject must be removed here. The ideal Sikh Society is not a religious or church state, or a theocratic organisation. A religious state is based on the assumption that unity of religion is, more or less, necessary in order to secure national unity and strength and in order to maintain order and social harmony. The terrible life and death struggle into which the Sikhs were pushed by the Mughal emperors, informed and guided by the doctrines of the political Islam, as expounded by the Mujaddid, resulted precisely from this assumption of Islamic polity. The wars of religion, and the prolonged periods of bloodshed which have disfigured the history of Europe for hundreds of years, are also seen to be the necessary concomitants of this assumption. The peace of Augsburg in 1555,

52. *Aur Sikh hon apne hi man kau.* —Dasam Granth, Akal Ustat.

53. *Koi hari saman nahi Raja.* —Bilaval, I.

concluded to end wars of religion in Europe, on the principle, cuius regio, eius religio, that is, that every subject must accept the religion of his ruler, is precisely the principle which animated and sustained emperor Aurangzeb throughout his long and eventful reign. The sub-conscious traces of this assumption still linger in the India of today to which alone certain recent developments in the body politics of the country can ultimately be traced. Similarly, a theocratic state is based on the presumption that the rulers are answerable, not for the welfare of the bodies of their subjects, but for the salvation of their souls and that the end of all political endeavour is not in this world but the next. Sikhism considers these assumptions as unwarranted, for, it believes that, there lies a fundamental and higher unity in all true religions which are apparently diverse and that, therefore, the social harmony and the national unity of a state must be founded on this fundamental unity and not wholesale conformity. The Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, has laid it down that, "The temple and the mosque, the worship of God by the Aryans and the prayers to Him of the Semetics, are fundamentally the same."⁵⁴ Sikhism thus postulates that it is the duty of an organised religion, which in the provision of liberty of conscience to non-Sikhs, but also to defend the right to such liberty, of those whose conscience moves them in a seemingly different direction. For achieving enduring agreement and unity, the order of the Khalsa relies upon the methods of enlightenment and persuasion, in place of coercion and brain-washing, while recognising all the while that though the Truth is one, the roads to it are many, and therefore the Sikhs pray that, "Let all be saved through whatever path can save them?"⁵⁵ Sikhism generally endorses the view of the medieval saint that, "the heart of so great a mystery cannot ever be reached by following one road only."⁵⁶

These, broadly, are the social implications of Sikhism, in the context of the modern political world situation and thought.

IV

CONCLUSION

In the year 1960, we are at a stage of world history in which not only the

54. *Dasam Granth* —Akal Ustat.

55. *Var Bilawal*, III.

56. *Guintus Aurelius*, in *Controversy with St. Ambrose*.

distance has been annihilated but other walls such as those of language, history, tradition, that separate peoples and nations from each other, have also been considerably lowered. The different living religions, therefore, are now in a position to look at each other with the eyes of comparison and to find as to in what points they fundamentally differ from their contemporaries, in the matter of doctrine and religious experience. This task of comparison entails re-assessment of the ancestral heritage of each religion and this process of re-assessment is by far the most hopeful sign which promises the emergence of a world Religion and a world Society, which is the dream of Sikhism.

To distinguish Sikhism from the other higher and world religions, therefore, it is necessary to point out the broad points of agreement between Sikhism and the other religions, as well as the points of difference.

It is a common postulate of all higher religions of mankind that there is a spiritual presence which mysteriously sustains the universe of phenomena and that it is this spiritual presence which is absolutely real. In this postulate, Sikhism agrees with the higher living religions of the world, such as, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Another postulate of these higher religions is that man finds himself not only in need of arriving at an awareness of this absolute reality, but also to be in communion with it, in touch with it. There is a basic urge in man which demands that unless this is done, he cannot feel himself at home in the world in which he finds himself born and living.

This is an implicit postulate of all the aforementioned higher and living religions and Sikhism is in agreement with them in accepting this postulate.

With regard to the nature of this spiritual presence, which lies behind and sustains the world of phenomena, it is agreed by all these higher living religions that it is not contained in, and is greater than, either some of the phenomena or the sum total of the phenomena, including the man himself. Sikhism agrees with this.

All these great religions agree with each other in asserting that the nature of this absolute reality, which lies behind and sustains the phenomena, has an aspect which is neuter and which is impersonal. The *nirvana* of the Buddhism and *parbrahma* of Hinduism, and the experience of the mystics of Islam and Christianity, affirm this aspect and characteristic of absolute reality. But they further agree that this absolute reality has also a personal aspect. The

Mahayana Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are all agreed that the absolute reality has a face which is personal, in the sense in which a human being is a person, and that human beings encounter this personal face of the absolute reality in the same sense in which one individual human being encounters another. What precisely this personal aspect is, whether it periodically manifests itself in the form of an *avtar*, a divine descent or it has manifested itself only one-for-all time and in a unique incarnation, is not universally agreed. But all these great living religions agree that the spiritual presence which permeates and sustains the world of phenomena has a personal aspect. *Mahayana* declares that this personal aspect of absolute reality manifests itself in the *bodhisattavas* and is plural. For Hinduism and for Christianity this personal aspect is triune, i.e., it assumes the form of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*; or the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In Islam personal aspect is deemed as singular in the form of God, the Allah.

In this matter, Sikhism, while accepting that the personal aspect of the absolute reality is singular, declares this Person to be the Universal Mind of which all other finite minds are but emanations. These finite minds are at each moment one with the universal Mind, the essence of their finitude being eliminative and not productive. That what makes a mind finite and distinguished from the universal Mind is, what has been eliminated out of it and not what has been produced by it. It is this universal Mind which Sikhism holds as the absolute Reality, and it is from this doctrine that the basic teachings of Sikhism, which essentially aim at the destruction of the self-centredness of the individual mind, arise.

Thus, although Sikhism is largely in agreement with the basic postulates of the great living religions of the world, it has its points of distinction which are not less important and which when translated into action i.e., into the counsel which it gives to mankind to attain its highest destiny, lead to practices and consequences which not only mark Sikhism from the other great religions but also make it of peculiar interest to the modern man.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS COMMONLY USED IN SIKH WRITINGS

(1) Akali

Its dictionary meaning is, a worshipper of *Akal* i. e. the Timeless God. Originally, the *Akalis* were the death-squads of the Sikhs, who spearheaded the task of toppling down the 'Mughals and Pathans' political hegemony in the North-West of India, according to the programme given to Banda Singh Bahadur by Guru Gobind Singh in the year 1708 A. D. Eversince, these *Akalis* have been in the vanguard of the Sikh struggle against tyranny and foreign rule and custodians of the Seat of Spiritual Sikh Authority, the *Akal Takht* at Amritsar. These *Akalis*, the most famous of whom was General Phula Singh rendered most conspicuous service in establishing Sikh Power upto the Khyber Pass, but they never recognised the political jurisdiction of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the King and always upheld the banner of the supermacy of the mystic Sikh Panth, in all matters, spiritual or political. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was diplomatic enough, not to challenge this legitimate claim of the *Akalis*, and on one occasion submissively accepted corporal punishment awarded to him at the *Akal Takht*, Amritsar for a sex-scandal involving breach of the discipline of the Khalsa.

In the year 1922 and afterwards, those who came forward to organize themselves into bands of volunteers to rescue the Sikhs' Holy shrines from the management of the hereditary priests, who were backed by the British Government, labelled themselves as *Akalis* and when these well-endowed historical holy shrines passed under the statutory management of elected Sikh representatives, these *Akalis* captured the management bodies and eversince have maintained their position as the managers of the Sikh gurdwārās as well as the true spokesmen of Sikh political ideas and aspirations. The *Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee* holds sway over the important Sikh gurdwarās while the *Shiromani Akali Dal* which is merely another side of the medal reigns supreme as the political spokesman of the Sikhs.

In current political parlance an *Akali* is one who holds the view that the management of the Sikh religious institutions must remain outside the control and influence of the Government in power whether in Punjab or at Delhi and who demands that in the North of India there should be a region where the Sikh voice is accorded a special political importance and who further acclaim that politics must not be wholly divorced from the postulates of religion.

Whatever the external dissensions and the fratricidal conflicts amongst these *Akali* organizations, these three aims and objectives remain as unchanging foundations of the *Akali* politics and mode of thought.

(2) Nihang

Nihang, literally, is an allegator, who is all supreme in the waters, just as the lion is the supreme king amongst the fauna of the forest. *Nihang*, in Sikh terminology, is a synonym for an *Akali*, just equivalent to a staunch Sikh. The *Nihangs* trace their origin from a son of Guru Gobind Singh whom Guru Gobind Singh robed with a blue battle-dress with his own hands and a *Nihang* is, therefore, invariably in blue clothes.

These *Nihangs*, and *Akalis* were identical till the middle of the 19th century when the Sikh political supremacy was extinguished in the Punjab and ever since two bands of *Nihangs* have continued to exist under licence from the Government of the day with the right to roam about in military formations, in free possession of their customary steel weapons of the 19th century, including the right to possess and retain a few old cannons, which are more symbolic than battle-worthy. These *Nihangs* have their headquarters at Damdama Sahib, a holy Sikh shrine in the Bhatinda District of the present Punjab and they claim that they are keeping themselves alert and ready for the day when the Khalsa will regain its political power and glory.

During the last 25 years, in a free India an irate bureaucracy have proceeded to annihilate small bands of *Nihangs* by mowing them down with rifle and machine gun, at the slightest pretexts, presumably to communicate unmistakably to the Sikhs the omnipotent character of the new power in a free India.

(3) Panth

Panth, literally means, *The way*, the good way of life. In the famous, sub-chapter of *Mahabharat*, called, *Yaksaprasna* the question is posed and answered as to what does the term, *Panth* mean. The answer supplied is, "The *Panth* is the path which all good men in the past have invariably trodden; "*mahājanā yena gatah saḥ panthah*." In the current religious terminology, the word *Panth* stands for the Sikh religion as well as the invisible mystic body of those who profess it and who thus represent the Will of God on Earth. It is to this *Panth* that all true Sikhs owe their allegiance and it is in the name of this *Panth* that a true sikh is expected to sacrifice his all on this earth. It is in the name of this *Panth* that the Sikh political party, the Shiromani Akali Dal fights its elections and runs other political campaigns.

This political concept of the *Panth* sharply distinguishes it from the current political convictions that hold that economic activity and considerations are the sole concern and aim of politics. The concept of *Panth* joins issues with the contemporary political mode of thinking and asserts that the true concern of politics is the ethical

and spiritual evolution and life of man in an organized society.

(4) Sant

Sant is the synonym for, 'the saint'. A saint or *sant* is a holy man clothed with the power of the numenon. The term *sant* occurs frequently in the ancient Pali literature of Buddhism from where it seems to have been resuscitated during the middle ages in India when the Bhakti Movement took birth. Through the Bhakti Movement, this term has come to be incorporated in the Sikh sacred literature. In the *Guru Granth* there is frequent mention of the status and significance of a *sant*; a holy man, who represents the salt of the earth and the hope of mankind. Out of this background has sprung a class of *pseudo-sants* amongst the Sikhs in recent years who claim holiness in the terms of the Fundamental teachings of Sikhism and thus have acquired much influence in the countryside where Sikh masses predominate.

These *Sant* are mostly illiterate or uneducated, according to the ancient prejudice that holiness accords ill with worldly learning and scholastic education. As a consequence, this class of the *sants* amongst the Sikhs is more conspicuous for fraud and chicanery rather than piety and capacity to guide individuals and direct the society towards ethical goals.

(5) Jathedar

Literally, *jathedar* means, 'a captain'. In Sikh parlance it means a Chief of a band of Sikh volunteers who have enrolled themselves into a unit for whole time service in the cause of the *Panth*, or Sikh objectives. This term gained fresh prominence during the Akali movement for gaining control of the Sikh *gurudwārās* during the twenties of this century when a large number of Sikh bands organized themselves to wrest the control of the Sikh holy shrines from the hereditary priestly classes.

Now, a *jathedar* remains a local political boss in Sikh politics owing his allegiance to the *Shiromani Akali Dal* which might be one or more than one organisation, each claiming itself as the true and genuine spokesman for the Sikh causes.

(6) Morcha

Morcha literally means, a battle-front, and in the current parlance of political struggle, particularly amongst the Sikhs, an issue of confrontation with the Government. Whenever the Sikh people are persuaded that the Government of the day is acting in a manner which is basically hostile to the fundamental Sikh interests, they create or seek for a situation in which the Government has to enforce its statutory laws by penalizing the Sikhs. Thus, a situation develops in which bands of Sikhs come forth to undergo penalties of the law with a view to assert the supremacy of

their own metalegal fundamental interests. Such a confrontation is given the name of a *morcha*.

The term has now travelled even into the non-Sikh circles where similar situations are named as *morchas* by the parties contending against the Government of the day on a particular issue.

(7) Akal Takht

It is one and primary seat of Sikh Authority out of all *Takhts* or thrones situated in various parts of India. *Akal Takht* is situated in front of the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar and it was established by the 6th Guru, Har Gobind (1595-1644) in the year. 1609 A. D. when the Sikh religion made a formal bid to proclaim its basic commitment to politics and social problems. The other three Takhts are situated at Anandpur Sahib in the Siwalik foothills of Himalayas, at Patna Sahib in Eastern India and at Nanded in Southern India. The building of *Akal Takht* comprises of a high throne of an altitude three times as high as was permitted to any authority by the Mughal sovereigns of India and it is higher than the Mughal Throne balcony in the Red Fort at Delhi. Thus, Guru Har Gobind, by establishing the *Akal Takht* and building this high throne openly repudiated the Mughal sovereignty over India and proclaimed the Sikh claim to a co-equal sovereign status. During the 18th and 19th and even 20th centuries the Sikh people have occasionally assembled at the *Akal Takht* to make national political decisions through consensus which have been deemed as binding on every Sikh. Many of these decisions have been of the nature of an open revolt against the established political authority in the country. The *Akal Takht* and the other seats of Sikh Authority, are in theory, managed and controlled by a *Jathedar* or Controller General and during the Sikh Raj even Maharaja Ranjit Singh was obliged to submit himself to its decisions.

(8) Mahant

Literally, *mahant* means, the headman, and in Hindu usage a *mahant* means the manager of a well-established temple. Amongst the Sikhs, a *mahant* stands or stood for the manager of a Sikh gurdwará since most of the historical Sikh shrines had remained under the management of such Sikh recluses who did not observe the outward symbols of Sikhism and thus remained safe from the Mughal Persecution. With the destruction of the Sikh power in Punjab in the middle of the 19th century these *mahants* became arbitrarily powerful as they came to be protected by the civil laws of a non-Sikh power, the British, in their possession as the hereditary controllers of the properties of the Sikh historical shrines. Gradually they lapsed into many Hindu and non-Sikh practices and adopted even anti-Sikh postures, backed as they were by the British bureaucracy. One such *mahant* was Narain Dass who in the year 1921 massacred about 150 Sikh pilgrims within the precincts of the Sikh shrine

commemorating the birth-place of the founder of Sikhism, Nankana Sahib, and this tragedy triggered off the Sikh upsurge, called the Akali movement which openly defied the *mahants* of the affluent Sikh shrines as well as the British bureaucracy backing them. After a struggle of about half a dozen years, the Sikhs succeeded in wresting the control of most of these shrines from the hands of these *mahants* and a statutory management committee called, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee was set up to control these shrines.

(9) Granth Sahib

More appropriately, *Guru Granth Sahib*, that is the *Book* of the *Gurus*, or the sacred Book which has the status of the last and final Sikh Prophet. It is the Sikh scripture containing hymns and revelations of the Sikh Gurus and some others who preceded the Sikh Gurus or were contemporary with them, prefiguring the glad tidings of the Spirit which manifested itself in the form of the Sikh religion. After the passing away of the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, the status of the successor in the line of the Sikh prophets was conferred on this Sikh Scripture which now invariably occupies the central place of prominence in all places of Sikh worship.

(10) Granthi

Literally, 'the keeper and the reader of the Sikh scripture.' In every Sikh *gurdwara* there is a *granthi* nominated or accepted as such by the local Sikh congregation. His duty is to keep and manage the *gurdwara* and to run its religious services, but he is not an ordained priest vested with the exclusive competence of performing or controlling Sikh worship in a *gurdwara*. There is no priesthood recognised in Sikhism and the *granthi* is thus merely a functionary of the Sikh congregation enjoying no special rights or status.

(11) Sadh Sangat

Literally, 'the congregation of the good people'. In Sikh parlance it means the Sikh congregation composed of such Sikh believers who are known to be poised and steadfast in the Panth. The founder of the Sikh religion had declared the *Sadh Sangat* and the Sikh Testament as the only twin 'miracles' vouchsafed to the Sikh religion by God for revitalizing and transforming the human society and ever since the *Sadh Sangat* or the congregation of those well-established in the Sikh faith has been treated with a great deal of reverence and invested with much power in relation to matters concerning the Sikhs and their religion.

(12) Giani

Sanskrit, *jnani*, a term which goes back to the ancient *upanishadas* and the *Bhagwad Gita*, where it stands for, a man of gnosis, one who has achieved the

supreme realization. He is thus spoken of as 'one with God' and it is this term which has been inducted into the Sikh Scripture and the Sikh usage. It stands, originally, for a Sikh who has achieved a mastery over the understanding of the Sikh doctrines and has practised these doctrines in his life to achieve complete realization of their inner truths. One who can expound the Sikh scripture properly is also referred to as a *giani*. During the recent years the term has been considerably devalued, both literally as well as on the political level. The Universities in the Punjab confer the academic Degree of *Gyani* on any person who passes through a cheap examination in Punjabi Language and literature, not necessarily the Sikh scripture, and in the Post-independence era, a Sikh is contemptuously referred to as a *giānī* by the non-Sikhs with the twin object of denigrating him, as well as avoiding the formal courtesy of addressing him as a Sardar—the courtesy—title reminiscent of a period when the Sikhs were the rulers in this part of India.

(13) Singh Sabha

During the third quarter of the 19th century, the Sikhs ultimately came to the bitter conclusion that they cannot oust the British Power from their homeland, the Punjab, since neither the Hindus nor the Muslims would join them in doing so and the Sikhs, therefore, turned their face towards the roots of their religious faith. It was in this background that they invited a Hindu demagogue from Maharashtra, Swami Daya Nand, to preach against idolatry amongst Hindus. Swami Daya Nand, who had failed to strike roots in any other part of India readily accepted this invitation and he was warmly welcomed and aided by the Sikhs to establish *Arya Samaj* societies in the Punjab with the object of purifying Hindu society of idolatry and other superstitions so that it may regain its pristine spiritual vigour and thus become a natural and ultimate ally of Sikhism. As it happened, however, the *Arya Samaj* Organisation and Swami Daya Nand, both passed into the hands of an element of Punjabi Hindus whose primary motivation was the hatred and opposition to Sikhism and not reversion to the original roots of Hinduism. In this manner the *Arya Samaj* movement became primarily a virulently anti-Sikh movement obliging its Sikh founders and office holders to quit it. Thus a positive Sikh religious reform movement came into existence, called the Singh Sabha Movement. The originators and founders of Singh Sabha movement were precisely those Sikhs who had invited Swami Daya Nand in Punjab and who had fostered the *Arya Samaj* Societies to begin with. In the year 1873, the First Central Singh Sabha Organisation was established at Amritsar under the chairmanship of Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, with Giani Gian Singh, the famous Sikh scholar as its secretary. In the year 1879, a rival Singh Saba Central Organisation was established at Lahore with Professor Gurmukh Singh of the Oriental College as its secretary and in the year 1880 both these central organisations merged into one. The clarion call of the Singh Sabha Movement was,

'back to the original purity of Sikhism' and to achieve this objective, a large number of social and religious reforms were effected. The Singh Sabha Movement remained vigorous for about half a century when under the impact of political upheaval in the rest of the country, the Sikh ethos were transformed into political yearnings. This change in Sikh attitude became reflected in the Akali Movement with the twin object of purifying Sikh practices and of ousting the foreign political power from India. Currently, an influential committee has been set up by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee to celebrate the Centenary of the Singh Sabha Movement as well as to revive the pristine purity of Sikh practices.

(14) Sardar

It is a Persian word which means the *elite*, or one belonging to the ruling race. The Pathans and Mughals who had become the ruling races in India for several hundred years were referred to as *Sardars*, when by the close of the 17th century, the Tenth Sikh Guru founded the Order of the Khalsa and one each member of this Order, he conferred the title of *Sardar*. During the 18th century, the Sikhs succeeded in wresting the political power from the hands of the Pathans and Mughals in the entire region of the North Western India and thus became *de facto* Sardars also in addition to *de jure* Sardars. Ever since, a Sikh has been addressed as a *Sardār* by way of courtesy during the British period by the Government authorities as well as by his own non-Sikh compatriots and neighbours. After India became free in 1947, a set policy has been adopted to discourage the use of this courtesy title in relation to a Sikh and a Sikh is now invariably referred to as a *Shri* in official phraseology and as a *giani*, when not something worse, by his neighbours and co-citizens of a free India.

(15) S. G. P. C.

As has been explained in relation to the term *manant* the well-endowed Sikh historical shrines were wrested from the hands of these hereditary managers of the Sikh *gurdwaras* through a Sikh upsurge, called the *Akali* Movement, during the twenties of this century. The Akali movement came to its logical conclusion in the year 1921 when the Punjab Government agreed to pass a statute for the management of Sikh historical shrines, called, the Sikh Gurdwaras Act. The Management Board set up under this Act is known as the Shiromani Gurdwará Parbandhak Committee or S.G.P.C. for short. Since this S.G.P.C. is elected on the adult Sikh suffrage, it has assumed the status of a nascent Sikh Parliament and as such it has presumed to act on a number of occasions to the great annoyance and sometimes general alarm of the Authority. During the last seven or eight years no new elections of the S.G.P.C. have been held and it has been publicly declared that the Government of India now contemplate splinting up the S.G.P.C. into three or four smaller Corporations for managing regional Sikh *gurdwaras* so that the S.G.P.C. may be finally and formally

shorn of its presumptions regarding its representative character *qua* the Sikh community as such.

(16) Khalsa Diwan

As has been explained with reference to the term *Singh Sabha* many central organisations were set up for the purpose of reviving the pristine purity of the Sikh faith and practices and in the year 1883 when these central organisations had merged into one organisation, the *Singh Sabha* of Amritsar adopted the name of the *Khalsa Diwan* for itself. Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi was the first President of this *Khalsa Diwan* and Bhai Gurmukh Singh was its Secretary. A few years later, grave differences arose amongst the members of the *Khalsa Diwan* as to the attitude to be adopted in the appraisal of the original forms of Hinduism, called *Sanatan Dharma*, but in its primary objective the *Khalsa Diwan* stuck to the original objective of the *Singh Sabha* Movement. This *Khalsa Diwan* ultimately became transformed into the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* which till a few years ago remained as the Central Organisation of the Sikh feudal chiefs.

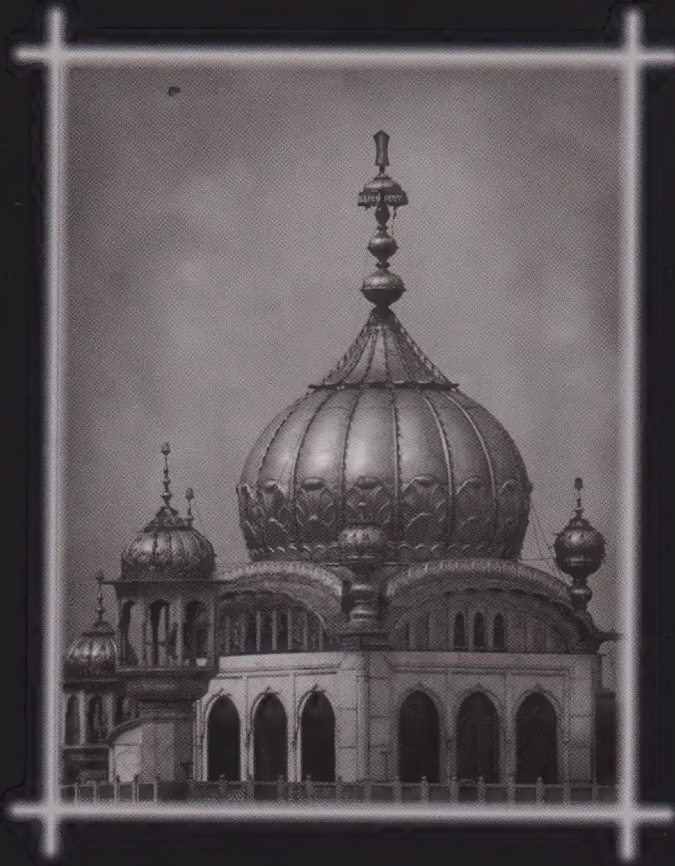
(17) Ram Raj

Ram Raj or 'the rule of god-king Rama' was popularized as a political slogan by Mahatma Gandhi during the thirties of the 20th century to designate the type of society and government to be set up in India when it was freed from the British yoke. The original content of the term is described in the ancient *Ramayana* of Valmiki, (Balkand, 1, 90-94), as a State in which :

"the people were full of happiness and joy, were contented and well-nourished, devoted to righteousness and their respective duties, *dharma*, healthy mentally and physically and free from disease and ailment, they were free from fear of famine; women enjoyed fully married life and rarely became widows and they were all devoted to their husbands; there was no fear of accidents or fire nor was there any flood havoc causing damage to crops and cattle nor were there gales and storms destroying life and property; No body was afraid of Starvation."

The basic idea of *Ramarajya* in the modern context is a modern, progressive, affluent and stable Hindu society and government.





FREE

